THE CREATION OF PROGRAM MATERIAL

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A report submitted to the Federal
Task Force on Broadcasting Policy

Date: January 31, 1986
DOC Contract: 36100-5-0372

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The following report has been compiled from questionnaires and interviews with 57 professionals directly engaged in the creation of program material for Canadian anglophone broadcasting. The areas in which they work include drama (TV movies, anthology drama, docudramas, sitcoms, miniseries), variety and all other "performance" programming. Excluded are news and current affairs, documentaries, children's and science programming. The interviewees represent a wide diversity of views in their capacities as designers, directors, performers, producers, technicians and writers.

The questions posed were of two kinds: those relating to specific issues arising from day-to-day activities, and those addressing general policy matters relating to broadcasting (for a discussion of the report's methodology, see the Appendix). The overall approach was to anchor policy issues in concrete data about what actually happens in the production of programs. All areas of broadcasting -- radio and television, public and private sectors, new technologies -- are included in the survey.

The structure of the report reflects the program creation process itself from the formulation of a concept to its reception by an audience. Because the creative process is the focus, certain high-profile issues such as CBC in-house versus independent production are often not confronted directly but alluded to on several occasions and examined from different points of view. Similarly, radio and television are not treated separately but as two facets of the broadcasting option available to creators of programming.

After this introduction, chapter two (Attitudes) examines the cultural and regulatory climate which either encourages or hinders program creation. Chapter three (The Technology) reflects a common belief among participants that technology is an integral part of the creative process. In the fourth chapter (The Idea), writers and producers in particular discuss the projects they would like to do, how these jibe with what broadcasters want and how much research and development aid is available to them. Chapter five (Access) details availability of production funds, access to programming decision-makers and the distribution of production facilities according to geographical location. The sixth chapter (Producing the Idea) examines the actual pre-production, recording/shooting and post-production process. Chapter seven (Distribution) concerns promotion, sales and the availability of the final product in the domestic market. Chapter eight deals exclusively with the CBC: although the corporation plays a prominent role throughout the report, its traditional position as the major player in Canadian program production -- and the current controversies surrounding its future role as a public broadcaster -- merit special consideration. Finally, chapter nine (The Long Term) summarizes major themes and makes future policy recommendations.

The methods used in the report are essentially journalistic, but with important qualifications. The aim of the report is to acquire a detailed picture of what these 57 professionals perceive to be their work and the issues arising from it. Its fundamental importance lies in documenting perceptions and attitudes: it does not claim to be an empirically verifiable or statistical analysis. Nevertheless, to the best of my knowledge, the factual detail presented in the report is accurate and, in many cases, I have been able to cross-reference material among several interviewees.

Many statements in the report may be conflicting or controversial, but all were initially expressed by the participants themselves. In compiling and presenting their ideas, I have had to tread a fine line between reproducing an unedited mass of opinion and refining ideas into a plausible thesis -- without unwarranted author intrusion. Many statements in the report are attributed, either to a named individual or to an anonymous individual or group; nevertheless, the absence of attribution does not mean that the writer has stepped in to lend a helping hand. Apart from unavoidable bridging material, the report has in fact been authored by the professionals themselves.

Mark Czarnecki

CHAPTER TWO: ATTITUDES

I. THE CULTURAL CLIMATE

In their statements, interviewees used the word "culture" in its broadest sense to include all expressions of a nation's civilization, whether social, economic, aesthetic or political. "Culture" meaning "élitist," "high-brow," etc. was consistently indicated as just one sub-class of culture as a whole.

A. Culture in Broadcasting

According to the founding mandate of the CBC, broadcasting was to encourage Canadian culture, which was threatened by the overwhelming presence of American commercial culture. That mandate for Canadian broadcasting survives today in the minds of program creators:

> More or less from the -- I hate to use the word -- "cultural" point of view ... there's a sense of purpose in doing what we do. We think it's a valuable commodity to have a sense of our country. We're doing humour about the place we live in, the people who live in the place with us, and the things that are part and parcel of living in this place -- rather than doing chicano ghetto humour, saying "lootenant" and pleading the 5th Amendment -- just that sense of who we are and where we are. (1)

i) Popular vs. high-brow

In the process of encouraging home-grown product as an alternative to American programming, many creators observe a dangerous tendency to counterpose a "high-brow" definition of culture not only against American popular culture but against Canadian popular culture as well:

> The Beachcombers is uncomfortable for the CBC because it's a popular and commercial success but it's not high-falutin', artsy-fartsy or slick and fancy television. So it's an embarrassment -- they'd much rather have that kind of success with other shows ... They don't pay too much attention to it except when the political types think it would be politically wise to mention it. (2)

This comment reflects a further polarization between CBC head office in Toronto as the purveyor of élitism, and regional production as the vehicle for more populist culture. Creators in the regions deplored the cancellation of The Tommy Banks Show, Don Messer's Jubilee, The Wonderful Grand Band and Dr. Bundolo, not just because they were taken off the network -- despite high ratings -- but because they were no longer available even in their own regions.

Their defenders are also convinced that such shows were not just regionally popular but, as one writer said, "They mastered the art of how to make Canadians palatable to Canadians." Many creators criticized the CBC's intention to decrease local exposure, claiming that the CBC's mandate was to do precisely that kind of cultural programming rather than network production.

ii) The private sector

"High-brow" culture with its limited audience is not an issue for the private networks. But many felt that the private networks are receptive to a wide cultural range of performance programming, as long as it promises profit:

> CTV is at least fairly open about where they stand: they're not interested in just the domestic market -- it has to be for world-wide distribution. Global feels the same: "Bring on ten Egyptians who recite the phone book and if you can interest an American broadcaster, we'll go in on it with you. We really don't care." (3)

The privates' success in encouraging Second City was cited several times as an indicator of their more open-minded hit-or-miss philosophy (compared to the CBC) -- and their reluctance to invest in developing Canadian talent to its highest potential.

B. Culture and Entertainment

i) Alienating audiences

By countering popular American entertainment with "uplifting" cultural fare, broadcasters run the risk of alienating their audiences:

> CBC drama is whittling down to a few high-profile shows with all the "morally superior" Toronto actors like R.H. Thomson ... There's no putting out the kind of stuff people want to see: it's done to demonstrate "What we could do if we'd been given the chance." So there's this symbolic overlay around Chautauqua Girl and Charlie Grant's War -- nobody wants to even breathe a word that they're not that great ... And when the privates want to be Canadian, they really rub your nose in it -- it'll be about Nellie McClung, or something Pierre Bertonish -- one camera and four setups with everybody being very earnest. There's not a hint of satire or light-heartedness or irony -- the qualities that actually make people *see* the fucking thing. It makes all

> the clichés about Canadian stuff come true. Thomson has a pretty good sense of humour as an actor, but by geez he won't get to show it on those programs. (4)

Several creators pointed out that this sentimentalized type of historical documentary was one aspect of an "official" use of the form -- a use that focuses on the past without relating it to the present. The other aspect is the restriction of the documentary to only the facts (news and current affairs). By doing so, broadcasters do not present a "true" picture: the truth demands context, interpretation, immediacy and an engaged audience:

> If people saw the veracity of the documentary, they would see that adding a dramatic element would bring the experience closer -- in human terms, just around the corner ... A lot of what the CBC is doing is chosen information: they inform and notify, and don't go beyond that. They don't feel it's their mandate to mix genres. (5)

ii) Satire and politics

Professionals questioned why satiric comedy, a major Canadian resource with proven mass entertainment value, was not more prominent on Canadian television. Comedies such as All in the Family and The Cosby Show are frequently the key to American network success, but despite the popularity of groups like CODCO and Royal Canadian Air Farce in theatres and on radio, few make it to television -- and when they do, they are "groomed" into formats which are at odds with their natural style:

> Our biggest difficulty in dealing with CBC TV was that they never really wanted us to do

> what we do best. They wanted to plug us into existing molds -- Wayne and Shuster with five people instead of two. Rather than saying, "You guys have got something here, let's exploit what you got," the feeling we've always had is "How can you change yourselves and dilute yourselves so that it's something we can understand?" (6)

The need to produce shows months ahead of broadcast for resource deployment reasons means that "topical" references essential to political satire are discouraged: one comedy group was told, "Do a Trudeau characterization if you want but don't talk about issues."

C. Geography

i) Regional conflict

Program creators live in all parts of the country: some may want to use the human and physical resources in their immediate community; others do not mind producing elsewhere as long as the facilities are adequate and their artistic goal is achieved.

What is initially striking about the many impassioned comments concerning the distribution of cultural production is that all parts of the country, from the largest cities to the rural towns, feel betrayed or excluded to some extent in regard to their opportunities. Although most resentment by far is directed against Toronto, and especially the CBC network, a Prairie writer points out that access to Vancouver is just as bad as it is to Toronto. Creators who focus more on the international market find all parts of Canada equally tolerant -- or intolerant. Many embattled CBC network veterans are convinced that corporation policy is now intent on "breaking up" Toronto in favour of the regions:

> CBC drama has really got to break through and grab the national consciousness by the throat -- it's not going to do it with a lot of diddling regional productions no matter how unfair that may be to someone in Newfoundland ... To try to finance everybody everywhere who has a camera and thinks they have a story to tell is nonsense -- it just won't work. (7)

ii) Money

While the CBC has attempted to spread production across the country to make better use of its facilities and maintain employment, creators in the regions felt there was less money available for regional production. Large facilities such as the Vancouver television studios have often stood empty -- or else been occupied, in the late 1970s by the René Simard Show, and in the mid-1980s by American film crews. The intense resentment these "imports" provoke is heightened by the perceived lack of money allocated for the region's own self-expression.

No matter how widespread talent and facilities may be, production money remains centralized in Toronto and Montreal. With regional producers flying to Toronto regularly for the famous "$600 cup of coffee" with potential backers, turndowns naturally get interpreted in terms of central Canadian vs. regional hostilities.

iii) Diversity

The same resentment surrounds network scheduling decisions made in Toronto. Producers in Toronto, however, are keenly aware of the corporation's stated intent to raise the profile of the regions -- often, in their opinion, to their own detriment (one muttered *sotto voce*, "May they wither.") But in attempting to balance representation and quality, the results often satisfy nobody. As one Newfoundland performer said:

> We're doing some of the best work in the country. But who *knows* we are? The *Globe and Mail* sends someone down here once every five years. Last year we did a new show and we couldn't get on *Morningside* because they said they'd had too many Newfoundland items already that year. It's just impossible. But who cares: we have an isolationist policy -- we don't want to be part of the country anyway. (8)

According to the regions, CBC network makes patronizing assumptions about how the regions should express themselves, and how the rest of the country will react to them:

> I think we have something rather unique to say here and we say it sometimes in unique ways. That kind of voice should be raised and should be heard as much as possible in the country and not filtered through the biases of people in Eastern Canada. (9)

The only region that feels adequately funded to present its own culture to itself is the far North. There the principle of regional diversity is accepted by both the CBC, which plans to move its northern headquarters to Yellowknife, and the subsidized Inuit Broadcasting

Company in Frobisher Bay. Just as the Canadian broadcasting system as a whole is concerned about U.S. programming, so are northern broadcasters -- but they are concerned about "aping southern Canadian forms" as well. Audience surveys showed a demand for programs that presented "the truth of their culture," and public funding bodies express no concern about whether other regions will like northern programming.

One radio producer argued that Montreal is "obviously the most important point in Canadian culture." Without denying the validity of regional expression, he believes that certain elements such as biculturalism give Canada a truly "national" culture. Unlike historical dramas such as Empire, Inc., his work about Montreal is contemporary, mixing drama and documentary, French and English, in ways that are comprehensible to both language groups and also speak to the nation as a whole:

> This tremendous fear about centralization and regionalization -- it seems that the kind of life you live in Toronto is not that different from the life one lives in Regina or Moose Jaw. I think that the human aspect of Canadian existence is more important than the regional details. If we have an institution like the CBC that all the time portrays to us how separate, how different, how regionally different we are -- that might be O.K., if we first know those lives, those common denominators, that say we are a nation. We are not a nation only when we play the Russians. We are a nation not only because we live in the same geographical areas, but because we listen to the same kind of music -- we hate it, we love it -- and we have the writers, we have the heroes, we have the butts, the anti-heroes and so on. This constant bickering about "This thing will never work in Halifax," and "Audiences in Toronto are much too snobbish to listen to this" -- they

> emphasize the differences of this country, which is O.K. again, if I know what are the things that make Canadians Canadian. (10)

This producer feels that CBC network in Toronto monitors Montreal production closely for political content. Among other stories, he has written a political docudrama about the murder of a fictitious journalist who advocated that Quebec join the United States, as well as a satire spoofing Canadian politics set in a besieged South American consulate. Both created a stir when broadcast in Montreal and were scheduled for national distribution, but they never appeared on the network.

II. SELF-IMAGE

A. Ethics

Those creators who felt most strongly about television as a medium did so largely because of its educational potential:

> The mind is a bank of empty memory cells -- the images that come across the set are the most powerful conditioning force we get other than the routine of daily life ... We can either poison our minds with television or do good things with it. (11)

Such a viewpoint sharpens the debate between Canadian and American programming.

i) America the bad

The constant self-definition of Canadian broadcasting in relation to its U.S. counterpart stirs powerful feelings about the morality of American television production and content:

> Look at American television in any moral or global ethic terms: the amount of money that's spent on thousands of treatments, hundreds of pilots, and it all boils down to four new series in the fall of which three are cut by Christmas. And the one that survives is total fluff anyway ... The devaluing of the images on television by putting it all through that grinder pulverizes human existence ... If one looked at that in terms of the use of world resources, it's astoundingly amoral. The CBC has its own inefficiencies, but -- (12)

American television often employs violence and sex to retain its audience, whereas "true" Canadian programming is more low-key:

> A lot of people think anything Canadian is un-American. The Beachcombers is both. But if

> you described the show to American media experts they'd say it would never work. There's no knives or guns, people aren't shot or stabbed, there's no jiggle or sexual innuendo -- there are stunts but not the kind that go along with explosives. (13)

ii) America the good

Creators were deeply ambivalent about American programs, especially in terms of their ability to hold and entertain an audience. Participants heaped just as much praise as abuse on American television, particularly for its high production values; as one producer said, "If it has pizzazz, that doesn't mean it's no good." Many believed that it was worthwhile investing money in high production values because audiences would simply turn off inferior work, no matter what its intrinsic appeal.

Although some found the American network system wasteful, all admired its entrepreneurial energy: many anecdotes related how doors were opened to new ideas and phone calls returned in the United States, even if a deal was not clinched. In Canada, a deep-seated conservatism among decision-makers, and an unwillingness to go through the most basic motions of personal contact, discouraged all but the most persistent:

> Just in the way National Public Radio hired me there was a kind of gang-buster cowboy capitalism which I had never experienced at the CBC. I was having coffee with the president of NPR two days after I was there ... If I saw him in the hall, he'd say he liked a show I did yesterday. That meant a lot. It also means you get dropped faster, and it's more brutal when the end comes. But overall it's a lot better. (14)

To a large extent, the qualities admired in American broadcasting are common to private enterprise anywhere. At the very least Canadian private networks and stations were quicker to make deals than the CBC -- but much harder to convince than the Americans that an idea could make them money.

iii) The CRTC

Nowhere was the ambivalence about the American broadcasting system and the role of private enterprise more evident than in the opinions expressed about the CRTC. Although many professionals recognized that the CRTC's mandate was in itself open to debate, the commission's equivocation about promises of performance was universally condemned as a betrayal of public trust. One writer felt that "People who don't do what they say they'll do" was the greatest obstacle he faced; he added, "Cultures can fail from bad ethics."

Program creators have come to depend on the CRTC to safeguard the broadcasting environment so that Canadian programming can take root. Many feel betrayed by what they see as ignorance, incompetence and lack of political will on the commission's part. Its decisions were considered inconsistent: singled out for special condemnation were the recent decisions to allow Cancom to beam four Detroit stations into isolated areas and to loosen Canadian content regulations on imported discretionary pay services such as the Nashville Channel.

There were serious reservations about the dependency of creators on any government body, although only a few radio producers suggested complete deregulation. The paternalism of entities such as the CRTC and the CBC was considered by some to be debilitating:

> There's this terrible Canadian thinking: "We should be funded by the government for whatever we do" ... The Australians just go out there and grab money wherever they can find it. Canadians are arrogant; they think, "We deserve it, we're putting this into Canadian culture" -- as if that's a stamp of approval. (15)

On the other hand, the majority who felt that the CRTC was necessary for the survival of Canadian programming were concerned that erratic performance was undermining its authority as an institution in the eyes of the public:

> I worry about the lack of public support for the CRTC's policies -- and what may happen if they get stricter. You see how well the public can respond to stricter policies on drunk driving -- why can't that happen to the CRTC? But then you look at the amount of thought and media attention that went into getting those kinds of policy changes. We're still looking for that kind of support for the CRTC. (16)

B. Inferiority

i) The United States

The proximity of a powerful American commercial culture has contributed to a sense of cultural inferiority:

> It has been said that the difference between Canadians and Americans is that Americans worship success, while Canadians are only comfortable with failure. We tend to believe that we are not capable of the best. We say things like ... "Not bad for a Canadian show ...", "It was so good I thought it must be American ..." We do not believe in ourselves enough -- in the strength of what we are. This attitude is reflected in attempts to create pale imitations of American formulae, television and film. (17)

Many feel that Canadian institutions are the worst offenders in this regard: one performer described an official gathering in Ottawa where the cultural attaché had publicly denigrated Canadian cultural institutions by comparison to those elsewhere.

ii) Evaluating talent

Several successful CBC network producers did not feel there was much artistic potential outside the major urban centres:

> To be perfectly bald about it, I have to say that, contrary to the romantic notion of a huge, untapped pool of talents and skills in this big land, just waiting to be brought in like Leduc No. 1, there is in fact a puddle, and a brisk competition to exploit it. (18)

One performer said that the CBC's treatment of talent was in itself demeaning:

> They always treated us as if we lived in garbage cans. They took the lid off in the morning, let us climb out, slapped some make-up on ... There is a pervasive idea at the CBC that the person who deserves the least respect is the person in front of the camera. (19)

However, she felt that, despite the private networks' sporadic successes, generally they were uninterested:

> The only people in the broadcast industry that I've had an opportunity to work with -- that has ever been there to involve me at all -- has been the CBC. If I was waiting on CTV, I'd still have no work -- you wouldn't be talking to me, because I would have no experience whatsoever. (20)

iii) Being supportive

Professionals who have worked in the United States remarked that Americans have a more positive view of

Canadians than Canadians themselves; Canadian work might be rejected not for being Canadian, but because it might not sell:

> I find the Canadian inferiority complex really offensive ... Americans see Toronto as an international city -- we're the only ones who think we're not international. Everybody there knows certain shows are Canadian, and that's fine. (21)

In the United States, there is more personal give and take:

> Canadians are not voluteers by nature in the feedback area ... New York is a different matter altogether. Feedback, negative or positive, delivered with home passion, is a sign of respect from one person to another and that is very exciting ... The Americans are not nearly as hard on themselves as the Canadians. An easing of our stern attitude toward ourselves could be improved, needless to say, by real dollars as the only metaphor for confidence at this point. (22)

C. Exodus

i) Geography and technology

Program creators would prefer to produce material from their immediate environment; the material need not necessarily reflect that environment, but roots in a community of family, friends and like-minded creators are important to growth. Militating against that desire is the tendency of technology to concentrate capital, plant and human resources in one place. For anyone outside central Canada contemplating a career in television in the 1950s and 1960s, it was almost imperative to go to Toronto -- or, as many did, keep on going to Los Angeles.

But the increased quantity of Canadian production, more flexible production modes and the greater availability of experienced talent have partly stemmed the outflow. Not only are facilities in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver of international calibre, but several smaller cities are promising production centres as well. Furthermore, the desire to remain in Canada is very strong, for personal reasons: many interviewees cited the quality of life as an important factor in choosing to stay.

ii) Open doors

Canadian creators leave the country for two major reasons. The first is that creators for television who see it as a vehicle for film still believe that Los Angeles may provide better opportunities. It may also be possible to work outside the country but still reside in Canada:

> I don't really care where I work -- I'd like to go where it's best for me. I've done theatre and television but I don't want to become dependent on being here. Wherever the best facilities are, that's where you go: there simply isn't as much here, so the odds aren't as good as in the United States. I have an idea for a Canadian film musical which could easily go south. But even if the producers went south for the money, they should still do it in Canada -- there's so much talent here. (23)

Those who most frequently mentioned going south tended to be in music and dance, which in their mass cultural form are based in the United States.

iii) Closed doors

The other reason creators leave is total frustration at being denied access to funding and facilities which they feel their achievements deserve. SCTV was frequently cited as an example where, for want of faith and money, the talent went south and, as one performer put it, "Canada lost eight great comedy writers who instead of attacking Reagan could be attacking Canadian politics."

The situation of John Gray, composer and author of Billy Bishop Goes to War and The King of Friday Night, is that of a musical writer developing his own forms who finds doors closed in Canada:

> In my work I undertake a form of guerilla warfare, i.e. by extensive touring throughout Canada I apply pressure to central agencies such as the CBC and regional theatres to produce my work. I never get the opportunity to do new work in television, film, recording, or any other mass media, but rather when that happens it is a kind of commemoration of a lot of legwork ... To beat that syndrome, I form complicated alliances with private producers, Telefilm, the BBC, etc. I never ever get offers from private networks like CTV and Global, ever. Winning awards, international or otherwise, seems to make no difference. Now I have a sense that access to Canadian mass media is decreasing, and am forming closer ties with the BBC ... It is becoming plainer and plainer that to progress I am going to have to cultivate international connections and productions ... I don't understand why at this point in my career it has to be such a battle, but it seems to be so ... It's all getting silly. Canadian television and what is left of the film industry are going to have to either shit or get off the pot, for soon there will be nothing to save. The public consciousness will have moved into mainstream U.S. culture and there will be no audience at all. (24)

D. Redefinition

i) Confidence

Although program creators were often critical of the broadcasting system and the opportunities it offered, as a group they revealed a powerful faith in being able to overcome any obstacle, money included, to achieve their goals:

> If you're excited by what you're doing, you just want to spend all your time doing it. You have to have the enthusiasm and the desire ... It's a survival game -- it depends on your ability to seek out the people who will finance you, rather than expecting them to come to you. (25)

Often that self-confidence was matched by an eloquent passion for Canada and its potential:

> I would invest my life and every dime I had in this country -- I would do that because I think it's a first-class place. I see all around me creative talent -- if only it were evident to everyone -- the Gretzky's, the Karen Kain's, the pop figures like the Blue Jays. My entrepreneurial spirit, my ideas, are as good as the Americans' and they come out of a sense of Canadian style, and exposure to Canadian art. (26)

Embraced by that feeling is the audience, and the belief that connections between creators and their audiences are possible:

> The great thing that happens in the arts is when the nay-sayers and the bureaucrats get out of the way and just let the artists deal directly with the audience -- terrific things start to happen. (27)

ii) The audience

Trusting in the audience to make the right decisions if given the chance was a common theme. "The audience is just waiting to be entertained," said one performer, but management gets in the way:

> One of my cardinal rules is that the audience is a lot smarter and more aware than any pinhead programmer who's part of the conservative management that runs rampant in this country. (28)

From a cultural viewpoint, the greatest mistake is to tailor creativity to a preconceived idea of what the audience wants:

> People say "Well, I know who my audience is, I know what my audience likes, I know what they dislike." This is the end of culture. Culture does not operate on the basis of supply and demand ... You do not know the audience and as such everything you do is almost exploratory, it's almost novel, because you do not know how they will react. (29)

iii) Believing in culture

In between the creator and the audience falls the shadow of disbelief in culture -- the spiritual force that can energize the relationship between the two:

> There is no real belief that culture can do anything for this country ... A nation does not survive on the basis of economics, but on the basis of culture. (30)

To create a positive environment, writers and producers stressed the need to mythologize Canada's past and present, not in a traditional patriotic sense but by raising the level of national consciousness so that Canadians are more aware of who they are and what they have accomplished. But because disbelief in culture is so pervasive, well-intentioned projects can go disastrously astray:

> We don't have a passion about ourselves ... Most of our heroes are being played by people from other countries and that doesn't seem to

> bother us ... If there was any kind of cultural climate in the country then Ned Hanlan in The Boy in Blue would not be cast from L.A. The absurdity of that choice, not only the cultural absurdity, but the straight absurdity of casting a nineteenth-century Canadian from twentieth-century Los Angeles would be so obvious. But it's not -- people just don't notice it. (31)

Within a corporation dedicated to culture such as the CBC, disbelief in the institution's raison d'être saps the will to take individual responsibility for decisions; according to one internationally acclaimed independent radio producer,

> The CBC is now unwilling to give individuals authority and power and trust them to make the right decisions. That change has happened in less than a generation. Ten years ago, I was given $5,000 for a project and told, "Go away and come back in six months with the program." (32)

In the current cultural climate, creators whose talent has mass appeal can live well; for those in a limited market, inadequate support of their work can be discouraging:

> It's still possible to succeed if a Canadian artist perseveres, but it's hard to really do all that well ... After 20 years, the next bit of recording will have to come out of our own pockets again -- we'll be lucky if we can pay the production costs and the musicians and then make that back through the royalties of air play. (33)

iv) Change

Overall, participants felt that the cultural climate in Canada was improving, and that important steps had been taken in broadcasting to forge a solid connection between program creators and their audiences. However, change has been slow, whereas the effects of technology are accumulating at a rapid rate:

> There are time gaps: someone first points something out, then a number of people start saying it, then it becomes an actual point of view in the country, and it gets supported by enough people that it then perpetrates some change ... But the change is coming so slowly ... and the technological changes are happening so quickly in terms of satellites and so on, it may not be fast enough. We just may lose it. (34)

III. THE BROADCASTING SYSTEM

A. The Concept

i) Principles

Participants agreed that the fundamental principle of Canadian broadcasting was that the airwaves are public property, and that the CRTC should regulate them accordingly. How the CRTC regulates or does not regulate (e.g., Canadian content) was distinguished from its right to do so:

> The whole argument that Canadian content regulations step on people's freedom to listen to what they want is looking at such a small slice of the pie. That ignores the coercion and financial pressure from the possibility of large profits, and the power of large companies to inundate the media. In such an environment, there's no freedom from that point of view ... The danger is of losing that basic difference with the United States: the airwaves here are a public service domain, not an environment for someone to make profits out of. That has to be respected. (35)

One producer felt that the reason the CRTC was not fulfilling its mandate was that it mistakenly assumed decisions based on pluralism would automatically result in program diversity. He believed the CRTC ignored the restrictive force of the marketplace in Canada, which could only be countered by a mandate based on principle.

ii) Political will

The CRTC should insure that the distribution component of the system makes available the widest range of options from the programming component to the widest possible audience. But participants felt the CRTC had not succeeded in insuring delivery of sufficient programming options:

> Where in broadcasting is the natural exploitation of raw resources by refiners and shippers? Canadian broadcasting needs the art, the writing, the design ideas, the technical and formal innovations, the love, the craft, the sweet reasonable budgets that unadulterated artists can bring to the airwaves. This should be the rule rather than the exception -- assuming that we want a broadcasting system that fosters the growth of a national arts community in order to give voice to the needs and aspirations of its citizens; it assumes that we need an extraordinary amount of communication and exchange in a far-flung and under-developed country. (36)

This larger issue of political will, and its reflection of the country's attitudes towards its own culture, underlies the CRTC problem:

> The fact that the CRTC hasn't done its job may be the CRTC's fault or it may be political weakness on the part of Canadians not to demand that it do so. The strength of the CRTC must reflect the strength of the public behind it. If we don't feel strongly about it as voting people, then the CRTC can't carry through. (37)

Creators assume that Canadians do want cultural self-expression, but have not been stimulated enough by their own cultural products to translate that wish into political will. Legislation alone cannot accomplish that; exposure over a period of time is also important:

> We've come a fair way in television. Compare it to the theatrical experience, where it's moved astronomically over the last 15 years ... and ignited the appetite within the viewers. It hasn't happened nearly to that extent in television. But the fact that CFTO has shot The Campbells is remarkable. (38)

Several interviewees believed that an important aspect of broadcasting is copyright. By making sure that copyright was respected on the airwaves, the CRTC could insure that revenues from copyright licensing would not only fortify individual creators but strengthen the culture as a whole:

> Cultural and national identity is a sub-category of copyright, not the other way around ... If you protect and expand creativity in all its forms, you will have more native painters, more Prairie writers, more Maritime song-writers. But you can't start out by saying "Let's have more Maritime song-writers." ... Instead, we should be creating the kind of environment where all kinds of creativity can flower. (39)

B. Mandate and Legislation

The 1968 Broadcasting Act and other legislation pertaining to the CRTC, the CBC and related communications bodies were considered outdated and completely inadequate to deal with the present and future broadcasting environment. A new Broadcasting Act is required to detail clearly and at length the cultural aims of Canada's broadcasting system, and the specific roles of the CRTC and CBC within that system.

The new legislation should be specific enough that the CRTC can act autonomously -- subject to occasional review -- without reference to ministerial directives. It was felt that Bill C-20 gave too much leeway for ministerial interference, and would be unnecessary if a comprehensive policy became the basis of the CRTC's working mandate. The practice of patronage appointments to the CRTC was deplored. And a major criticism of the CRTC was the commissioners' unfamiliarity with broadcasting, and its inability to apply expertise -- either from within itself or in a consulting capacity -- to broadcasting issues: one radio producer who wanted to start a station stressing diversity was astonished when he was asked during a license hearing whether there was "enough good music around to play."

i) Licensing

Bill C-20 highlighted for creators the perceived dangers of ministerial interference and cabinet review, especially with regard to cabinet's request to the CRTC in the fall of 1985 to review its decision awarding television licenses in Regina and Saskatoon to Saskwest, a subsidiary of Canwest in Winnipeg. Creators from the prairies supported the Saskwest license in light of the achievement of Canwest's Winnipeg station CKND in the area of regional drama production, and protested partisan interference that ran counter to the best interests of the region's culture.

Professionals were very critical of the CRTC's unwillingness to enforce promises of performance by private stations and networks. Several felt that, given the large profits of the private communications sector, the CRTC could use its licensing powers to increase fees or impose a levy such as the 8% tax on cable companies to boost program development funds.

Many felt, especially in radio, that restrictive ownership decreased program diversity, and that the large chains such as CHUM, Selkirk and Moffat owned too many stations. Suggested changes to the licensing process included more frequent monitoring of broadcast performance and re-opening competitions when licenses came up for renewal.

C. The Public Broadcaster

i) The mandate

There was virtually unanimous agreement that an essential component of Canada's broadcasting system should be a public broadcaster. Most interviewees were careful to distinguish their view of what a public broadcaster should be from what they considered the CBC to be today:

> What Pierre Juneau tries to do is equate the CBC as he wants to run it with public broadcasting. I make a distinction. I'm all for public broadcasting. I'm not for the CBC the way it is now. (40)

ii) Program production

A new mandate for the CBC must make its major function very explicit. One producer suggested that in-house production should be justified as part of the moral mandate of the CBC -- otherwise it should be eliminated:

> Is the CBC a creative and interpretive force, or is it only a hiring force? If it is a hiring force, then the job of the CBC has to be first of all educational, and it has to help create those companies that can produce and can actually do the work. If the CBC is itself a creative institution, it should take care of the creativity of the country. It should not present that creativity, it should itself create. (41)

Though few creators made such a sharp distinction, establishing the CBC as a principled creative force was commonly viewed as a prerequisite to production:

> We need a public broadcasting system that knows it's a public broadcasting system with obligations

> to honour. It would have more integrity and be seen to have more integrity. Artists would be proud to be associated with it; they would try harder to get at it if it weren't such a compromise. (42)

Some who believed the CBC should fulfill a creative mandate also believed there were common aspects to Canadian culture and that the CBC should express them:

> The CBC is maybe the only source of a unified pattern of culture this country has. In a country where you have very little artistic, cultural and linguistic communication, and where you don't have movements among artists employing the same techniques of expression, CBC radio and TV becomes the one source to do that ... (43)

Supporters of a CBC presence in all areas of programming argued that the CBC sets an example for the whole system:

> One function of the CBC is to offer alternatives of quality and upgrade the whole system. Look at BBC and ITV. Just because the BBC heads off in one direction doesn't mean the commercial networks have to follow suit. But just aiming for quality means the BBC ups the key signature for the whole medium and you end up with Granada doing The Jewel in the Crown. The precedent has been made: the first man out has cut through the snowdrift ... It doesn't mean that all television has to be of "higher" quality -- it can't, it's too much of a popular medium -- but you're just trying to preserve diversity within the medium. (44)

If the CBC accepted such an educational role in regard to the rest of the broadcasting system, its programs could also be valuable resource material for private networks and stations. Private radio producers saw great potential in the CBC archives for reruns which might be of interest to their audiences.

iii) Creativity

A large majority of the professionals interviewed believed that the CBC should not be involved in as many programming areas as it is at present. They argued that the corporation's inadequate funding made it necessary to establish priorities: information programming invariably came first, followed by varying percentages of performance programming. The CBC's present funding is insufficient for its present mandate, and a revision of mandate should entail an appropriate revision of funding.

But the major concern with regard to performance programming was whether the CBC in its present state does in fact encourage the creativity necessary for high-quality, entertaining programs. Generally interviewees felt that it does not, and the following statement was typical:

> CBC has to get out of production. With the Broadcast fund helping independent production, programming will get better and better. People outside really have to hustle, while in the CBC they're cloistered and protected. They become complacent, whether they want to or not: once they've spent a lot of time there that eventually happens, and the quality of programming suffers terribly. Very few individuals who have been there a long time are doing things that aren't reduced to formula. You have to churn out your one or two films a year, but there's no struggle to do something better, to stretch the technology or the medium in any way. It's a 9 to 5 job -- or more like 9 to 4:30. I'm not saying everybody in the world should work as hard as I do -- I work as hard as I do because I love what I'm doing -- but it would be wonderful if everybody wanted to do that. Most of the good cultural programming on CBC is by outside people. (45)

Defenders of the CBC felt that the same sense of security which its detractors attacked was in fact the source of its creativity:

> If the CBC moves out of production, there will be far less experimentation and people taking chances. Nobody will have a spare moment: when we do have spare time, people do some experimenting and play around with an idea they've had. But if everybody's under an individual contract to do a show, there's no slack for that type of thing. (46)

Similarly, the same marketplace which some felt pushed independent producers to perform better was seen by others as intolerant of worthwhile subjects that commercial buyers considered had low audience potential:

> The best, the finest, feature of my working life at the CBC is the freedom from commercial constraints. In the full knowledge that a drama mini-series on breast cancer, occupying three hours of prime time, would by its nature make a very muted appeal to commercial sponsors, my bosses encouraged me to make that film. You've Come a Long Way, Katie in its first run had not a single commercial sponsor -- its second run had sponsors because by then it was a certifiable success. That kind of risk-taking is to be cherished. It extends to the use of no-name actors, novice writers, directors and producers. I had never written or produced a drama when I was given the opportunity to write and produce You've Come a Long Way, Katie. (47)

These are just the main points in a complex debate which will reappear throughout this report, culminating in the chapter on the CBC.

IV. REGULATIONS AND INCENTIVES

A. Canadian Content

The general feeling about Canadian content regulations was that they were better than an unregulated marketplace, but that in their present form only partly succeeded in their goals. Although many creators found them necessary, few were completely comfortable with them:

> It's only in Canada that there's still that Canadian ghetto. That's why I don't hold much truck in an all-Canadian channel -- I don't want my programs in a Canadian ghetto, I want them up there for comparison with the best in the world. The unfortunate thing about Canadian content regulations, which are absolutely vital and necessary, is that they tend to create that kind of ghetto thinking -- that we do it because we have to. (48)

i) The point system

Inconsistencies in the point system for determining Canadian content are frustrating, and often unpredictable. "Cultural markers" such as Canadian locations were considered insufficient to determine the cultural value of a project, and generally creators felt that a quality criterion should be much more influential. There were many anecdotes about point counts being applied bureaucratically without taking context into account. The director of a performance special on a foreign composer, having lost points on that count, believed that the best choreography of a certain ballet by the composer is in the repertoire of an American company. But filming them would make the project ineligible for the Broadcast fund:

> We should be able to make the very best possible film. A case should be made for each film on its own merit as to whether it's in the best interest of the film to use Canadians or not. They're talking on the one hand about international marketability and making great product and on the other hand using Canadians -- maybe there isn't a Canadian that can perform a certain thing. (49)

The point system is intricately tied in with co-production as well. Because the Broadcast fund stresses investment and recoupment, co-production financing has become almost a necessity for expensive projects. But foreign co-producers often demand a voice in casting, and the final agreement may severely compromise the creator's intent.

ii) Formating

The CRTC's format rules, especially in radio, were attacked for being too easy to evade and not targeted specifically in those areas that would genuinely promote Canadian culture and diversity. In radio, the regulations on foreground programming are unreasonable: one producer pointed out that it made no sense on a rock station to go into biographical detail about a well-known star like Bryan Adams just because one of his songs is used in a foreground programming format.

The CRTC has not cracked down sufficiently on evasive programming like cheap Canadian talk and game shows on television, and burying Canadian music away from prime time on radio. The Broadcast fund has given more incentive to the private sector to create diverse and quality programs for television. But on radio, the CRTC has allowed

FM stations to follow the commercial lead of AM, and both dials have very little diversity. The homogenizing effect of market factors on private radio has shown the inadequacy of the CRTC's format regulations.

The situation is so extreme, especially in the major urban centres, that only extreme solutions were suggested. One was to make the format regulations very specific and stringent -- for example, by requiring stations to play live local concerts during the drive-home hours. The other extreme solution would be complete deregulation; as one disgusted independent producer said, "If they're going to wallow in the muck, let them really wallow" -- in the hope that eventually a new idea would appear more commercially profitable.

iii) The music experiment

The impact of policies intended to stimulate an industry through content regulation alone are difficult to measure. While acknowledging the undoubted benefits of AM radio stations playing 30 percent Canadian content over no regulation at all, musicians pointed out that those benefits accrued in proportion to the perceived commercial potential of the mass audience for a certain kind of music: rock has profited the most, "serious" contemporary music probably the least.

For those musicians whose income is derived mainly from records and personal appearances, broadcasting has become essentially a promotional device -- performance and mechanical royalties are perks. But for most musicians, especially outside the mass culture area, royalties are a major source of income. It is these musicians who also contribute most to the potential diversity of broadcast programming -- and it is they who are least helped by current legislation, even when their popularity in another medium has been established. Writers of theatrical musicals such as John Gray, whose works have been seen by several hundred thousand Canadians, get virtually no air play:

> Performance royalties from my songs get into the two-figure range ... Unless you're in the AM singles market there really is no recording industry here ... Where you make a lot of money is from cover versions on television, but there are very few singers in Canada who do that -- they either sing American hits or their own material. There are some 60 to 70 songs in my musicals, but no one has ever covered one in public. (50)

Gray's experience is typical, and underscores the fact that careful attention to the infrastructure of the music industry -- support for independent producers, Canadian control of distribution and publishing, full copyright payments through CAPAC -- must be paid if content regulations are to achieve their full effect.

B. Funding

One technician felt that talking about Canadian content minimums instead of import quotas was a negative approach to encouraging culture: it assumes that the norm is foreign content and that Canadian content is an aberration.

Import quotas reinforce the idea that broadcasting has a strong industrial component, and should therefore be accorded the same protection and stimulus as other domestic industries which are considered beneficial to the country. But because broadcasting is so often viewed as a delivery system for other arts which may already receive production support, and because the publicly funded CBC is considered to be the prime exponent of broadcasting in its own right, little stimulus has been given to the broadcast system as a whole.

i) The Broadcast fund

Mixed feelings were expressed about Telefilm's Broadcast fund. As with Canadian content regulations, available money for anything is infinitely preferable to none at all, and creators welcomed the significant vote of confidence in their efforts that the fund represented. However, having lived with the fund for several years, they have a better understanding of its long-term effects -- and have many reservations.

A fundamental problem with the fund is that it was set up to revive the independent film industry by giving it broadcasting as a delivery system.

There was strong support for removing the Broadcast fund from Telefilm's authority so as to make money available to both radio and television producers who could answer more directly the needs of the broadcasting system. Such a move could also allow Pay-TV access to the fund if it expressed interest in not just being a delivery system for film but in developing projects tailored to its particular broadcasting format as well.

The fund's emphasis on investment and recoupment means creators who choose not to be producers as well get little support:

> We give the perspective and the cultural power to the person who can run the books. If I'm successful at raising money and playing money deals and playing with books and grants, I then get to broadcast my artistic taste ... Why should the people who know how to make money in society make the society? (51)

Many felt that Telefilm was increasingly concerned with making Hollywood-style features and ignoring other kinds of filmmaking such as classical performance programming that had demonstrated sales potential on international markets. Anecdotes about the Broadcast fund's last-minute changes of rules and financial withdrawals were common, and regularizing the fund's priorities and procedures was considered essential.

Several professionals believed that the fund has also had a negative effect on CBC in-house production. Those who believe CBC creators are complacent felt that the competition from independents was pushing in-house producers to do better work. But the licensing of independent production has strained the corporation's limited financial resources, not only in terms of license fees themselves but in the establishment of a separate department within CBC to handle those productions -- and provide them with in-house resources the independents might not have access to outside.

At the same time, the fund's preference for high production values contributes to inflated budgets and salaries, which in turn lure talent away from the CBC.

One independent producer said that CBC in-house producers were "just getting the left-overs" in terms of programming, and a CBC producer echoed this view:

> The big productions are going outside and in-house productions may very well wither away. We'll have the Applebert report in the good old Canadian fashion, just lapsing and eroding into it ... A lot of films will not be made outside the CBC simply because they are not "commercial" ... But I hope to God that we are not going to be relegated to only doing those worthy made-in-Canada enterprises. (52)

ii) Distribution

Despite the fact that the Canadian broadcasting system appears to have massive technologies to deliver product, many interviewees felt that there was a huge gap in the feedback cycle between artists and audience necessary to nourish a culture. Independent film producers in Edmonton and Winnipeg, for example, whose work for television was financed in central Canada, frequently find that nobody in their native cities actually sees their work -- even though the films have those regions as their subject.

The problem of insufficient feedback was especially acute for performers:

> For an actor, the most important feedback always comes from the audience ... I work constantly, but nobody ever sees my work ... I've done a lot of American television which has never been shown here, or it gets shown on Pay-TV and I don't even know anybody who has Pay-TV. It makes feedback impossible. (53)

A common suggestion for solving this problem was to establish another public network or superstation that could program repeat material from both private and public sources.

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FOOTNOTES

NW = Name Withheld by request

TWO: ATTITUDES

1. Abbott, 10-11 (page numbers of transcript)
2. NW
3. NW
4. NW
5. NW
6. NW
7. NW
8. Walsh, 9
9. MacLean, 16
10. Hausvater, 19
11. Saltzman, 7-8
12. Thomson, 20-21
13. Williams, 6-7
14. Wilson, 8
15. Fresco, 16-17
16. Thomson, 18
17. McAndrew, 2
18. NW
19. NW
20. Walsh, 20
21. Fresco, 12
22. Ditchburn, 2
23. Hyslop, 6
24. Gray, 1

25. Fresco, 14
26. Taylor, 11-12
27. Abbott, 27
28. Pritchard, 2
29. Hausvater, 23
30. Hausvater, 25
31. NW
32. Wilson, 4
33. Whiteley, 7
34. Thomson, 11
35. NW
36. Taylor, 1-2
37. Thomson, 8
38. NW
39. Guettel, 38
40. NW
41. Hausvater, 19
42. Taylor, 9
43. Hausvater, 5
44. Thomson, 5-6
45. NW
46. Mess, 19
47. Locke, 5
48. McAndrew, 9
49. NW
50. Gray, 7
51. Thomson, 21
52. NW
53. Lynch, 13

CHAPTER THREE: THE TECHNOLOGY

I. THE CHALLENGE TO CREATIVITY

A. Teamwork and Mass Production

The creative act of producing programs for broadcasting incorporates a substantial technological component. Very often, this aspect of broadcasting is invisible; writers, for example, may view radio and television strictly as vehicles for their ideas, and the technology solely as a non-creative adjunct.

Time and again, however, interviewees stressed that all aspects of program production are essentially creative. Everyone from actors to technicians brings expertise to their craft; as one technician said, "Just because we operate machines doesn't mean we are machines." Successful programs depend on teamwork and an atmosphere of mutual respect in which suggestions from all involved are welcome. One producer makes a point of calling technicians "technical artists": he did not mean that all technicians are equally talented, any more than producers and writers are -- simply that respect for the craft of others goes a long way towards creating a successful product.

Nevertheless, even assuming an ideal working atmosphere, technology by its very nature poses a challenge to the creative process. Creativity is integrative, while technology fragments production -- the mass assembly line ("the sausage factory") is the most obvious example. A technology-driven production process requires substantial capital investment and concentrates resources in one facility. On the one hand, this makes access to resources easier; on the other, the individual resources -- studio space, editing facilities, manpower at both the technical and producer level -- tend to compartmentalize and split apart. Left unchecked, this tendency undermines the integrative process necessary for creativity.

B. Institutionalization

The larger the facility, the greater the potential tension between technology and creativity. Virtually everyone interviewed from the CBC pointed out the results of not confronting this problem directly: polarized labour/management relations that seem incapable of resolution according to models in other areas of industrial relations. Because vertical promotion from technical and production levels into management is rare, management often misunderstands the demands made by technology. Despite the recent centralizing thrust in administration, the CBC has devolved into separate and often warring production elements. Inexperienced and insecure producers aggravate the situation by pretending to know more than they do instead of utilizing the technicians' expertise.

i) CBC: The early years

Conflict was not always the norm at the CBC. Several technicians and producers who had been with the CBC since the 1950s and early 1960s recalled that the best programs then were done by production units which had worked together as a unit for a substantial time. Crews became specialized in certain areas -- whether variety, current affairs or drama -- and informal apprenticeships developed within the unit. Film crews often create the same atmosphere, but as the use of film increased in television production, a social hierarchy appeared which placed film above video as a superior creative form. The representation of film and video technicians by two different unions -- CUPE and NABET -- only reinforced the division: in the minds of many producers, CUPE technicians are more eager to work, readier to bend union rules for the sake of creating a good product than their NABET counterparts. Whether or not this is true, the perception in itself is damaging to good programming.

ii) Fragmentation

Not all technicians can fit into a crew unit; furthermore, the need to schedule manpower cost effectively means that crews often have to be rearranged. Since the 1960s, technicians have become less specialized in relation to the types of programs they work on. Their ability to contribute fruitfully to the overall creative process has diminished accordingly; they take less pride in their work and become demoralized. In recent years, the CBC's drive to increase information programming has reinforced the tedious and unrewarding conditions of working piecemeal fashion in the studios.

Many creators argue that the CBC could address these problems and still maintain efficient deployment. In the absence of such initiatives, however, successful producers over the long term learn to manipulate the bureaucracy so that they can re-create the cooperative autonomous units which flourished in the early days of television:

> To produce a continuing series inside a large bureaucracy is difficult. To succeed, one has to become engaged in a kind of guerilla activity against entrenched and rigid systems. But that comes with the territory. The interesting thing is that it can and does work if you know how to work the system, but it's exhausting, unnecessary and often frustrating. What you need to accomplish it is a self-contained unit with all the people in it reporting to the production unit rather than to various service departments. (1)

iii) The private sector

At the private networks, technicians find management accessible and willing to deal with problems directly -- partly because a significant number have worked in production themselves. Working conditions at the privates are more strenuous, and disruptive scheduling was cited as the major difficulty; on the other hand, technicians welcomed the challenge of competition, and the smaller size of these institutions makes teamwork more likely.

Crews working for independent producers are often skilled in many aspects of production. Common pride in their work and enthusiasm for the job forge a cooperative unit feeling. The Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople encourages its members to work with producers towards a common goal:

> I'm happy to be part of a Canadian union. Our attitude towards bona fide Canadian producers like Atlantis and Insight is, 'Let's not get heavy -- let's give them a chance.' We look at the production coming in and we know when to loosen the reins. If problems come up, we work with the producers. Sometimes the union members have a lot more experience, and the producers need our help. (2)

A freelance veteran of nearly 20 years still had enough enthusiasm for his work that he was willing to give strapped producers some free time during the recent recession because the projects were worthwhile and because he "wanted to exercise his craft."

C. Equipment

Unions and management have been slow to adapt their expectations and demands to changes in technology over the past 20 years: as the sophistication of equipment increases exponentially, conflict will worsen. Thanks to new digital equipment at both the recording and receiving ends, productions on location will deliver much higher quality images; this in turn will move more production out of the studios onto location.

i) Studios in decline

The shift away from studio production will be reflected in a shift of budget priorities away from manpower towards equipment. This will have significant impact not only on labour/management relations, but will change the nature of production. One radio drama producer feels that young technicians are already more concerned with technology than text:

> More and more technology as it improves is being used as a way of life instead of the convenience for which it was designed. Because the younger people haven't had the chance to be broadcasters, they don't know what it is to sit in front of a microphone or a camera and actually catch an audience out there... A good text can save a bad performance -- a good performance can save a bad text. Technology can save neither; however, it can enhance both if it's used properly. (3)

The move away from studios will find a broader parallel in the relationship between traditional production centres -- Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver -- and the regions. Once smaller centres have access to electronic field production and editing equipment, the traditional argument that only the large centres can produce programs of high broadcast quality will have less force. The independent producers' lack of institutional heft, in some ways a drawback at present in the film production process, will increasingly be seen as a virtue.

ii) Effects on programming

Much of the equipment at the CBC is antiquated and broken. Cannibalization is the norm, not an aberration, and replacement always gets bottom priority: in addition to the $75 million cutbacks of November, 1984, $10 million for investment in new equipment was also dropped.

Both technicians and producers argue that replacement of equipment should receive a much higher priority because the present conditions seriously affect the quality of programming. Not repairing bad equipment is false economy; as a result, the CBC cripples or drives away technical and artistic expertise. For directors of photography who contemplate leaving the CBC to work on independent productions, for example, the lure of state-of-the-art equipment is hard to resist.

Because of the CBC's recent emphasis on information programming, those departments have been re-equipped first. However, now that a major push in drama coincides with a period of cutbacks, inadequate cameras and editing facilities are blunting that initiative. In

Toronto, the job is further complicated by the scattering of resources across the downtown area, a problem which the Broadcast Centre will attempt to remedy. Music producers and recording engineers stressed that its new digital facilities would mean the difference between staying in Canada or going abroad in an industry where the competition for audiences is intense. The expectation of high-quality sound on FM stereo makes the purchase of equipment such as compact-disc players a necessity, but CBC stations lag far behind the privates in this regard.

II. THE ART IN TECHNOLOGY

A. Technology and Content

Radio and television have traditionally been viewed as invisible delivery systems for a content which originates elsewhere: it is assumed that, as media, they do not influence the message, which travels intact and unmodified to the audience. Creators in the performing arts felt this was most evident in television coverage of performance programming: a play or symphony is filmed by pointing two cameras at it with no attempt to engage a television audience.

Not surprisingly, this kind of cultural "missionary work" invariably fails to arouse audience interest; the following comment is typical of many put forth by those who recognized the aesthetic structure of the broadcast media:

> When you're writing for film or television, you're only writing for one actor. When you work for theatre you're writing for hundreds and thousands of people to say those words: they have to have a kind of integrity within themselves, whereas words for television have to be entirely suited to the mouth they're coming out of. They're never going to be done again by anyone else. (4)

Such observations are especially pertinent to creators of Canadian programming. The introduction of radio and television technologies in Canada coincided with a rebirth and reshaping of the country's creative life. Creativity and communications technology are so intertwined in Canada that to ignore their interdependence is to distort their content and significance.

B. Radio

Judging from their statements, creators for radio seem more passionate about their medium than creators for television, who view it essentially as a vehicle for delivering film. Nobody said, as many did for radio, that from an early age they always wanted to work on television. In the 1930s and 1940s, radio became a seedbed for all aspects of Canadian culture that depend on language and music. Several producers felt it was ironic that today millions of dollars have gone into a television broadcast fund, while no such body exists for radio.

i) Drama and documentary

Radio technology in Canada did more than reflect aspects of Canada to Canadians: it developed and made peculiarly its own two genres, the radio drama and documentary, as well as blends of the two which are distinctively Canadian. During the golden age of drama on both public and private radio, the medium's relatively low production costs and flexibility encouraged experimentation. Fiction writers and dramatists often received national exposure under a powerful drama producer: several interviewees pointed out that the success of Calgary playwrights W.O. Mitchell, John Murrell and Sharon Pollock in the late 1960s and early 1970s stemmed largely from work they did for CBC's Fred Diehl during that time. As for documentaries, one producer said: "Canada was doing 60 Minutes on radio in the 1930s."

But documentary makers emphasized that the documentary encompasses much more than "mere" documentation. The form has evolved over the years into the docudrama, with its emphasis on social issues, soundscapes such as Glenn Gould's The Idea of North and "fictional" docudramas, where the lines between fact and fantasy, recorded event and created event, are deliberately blurred. However, creators exploring these possibilities find access increasingly restricted, partly because the CBC, the main market for it, has become more and more compartmentalized in its programming. Documentaries are strictly news and current affairs, and producers of programs merging genres such as documentary and drama have difficulty placing their work.

C. Television

i) Radio and film roots

In the United States, the popular commercial culture developed by radio translated readily into the popular commercial media of film and television. In Canada, the transition from early radio, which combined elements of popular, commercial and classical culture, to television was quite different:

> In the 1940s, radio in Canada reached such an exhilarating level -- one might have expected television, the next medium, to pick up from there and take it further by enhancing the word with a visual aspect. We already had an analytical documentary process to describe what was going on in the world, but because of specialization people looked at television as a totally different medium. Instead of thinking that it was radio with pictures, they saw it as completely different from radio. (5)

Like its American counterpart, Canadian television had an indigenous film industry to draw on -- the National

Film Board, which had evolved a sophisticated documentary tradition. For a brief period in the 1950s and early 1960s, live television did draw on Canada's established radio and film traditions. However, starting in the mid-1960s, the Hollywood production model became the norm, giving rise to the "critical mass" justification of centralized network production and an increasing assimilation of American stories and genres. The Canadian tradition of popular culture virtually disappeared from performance programming except for regional productions such as Don Messer's Jubilee and a resurgence of comedy and drama in the late 1970s.

ii) Canadian genres

Program creators disagree about the virtues of the U.S. commercial network production mode and its applicability to Canada. Some producers and writers felt that Canadian stories and sensibilities could be well presented in U.S. television genres such as sitcom and melodrama. But many questioned those models, especially for the CBC:

> Certain television adaptations from our popular cultural tradition -- say comedy or musical theatre -- can't afford to be filmic. They shouldn't be modelled on the American sitcom/drama, which is what the history of our television drama boils down to -- straight cuts, pseudo-realism, and so on. American forms dominate our idea of what entertainment is -- a deep brainwashing has happened there. There's no reason the CBC has to be like an American broadcasting network ... It doesn't have to be run like a business, it doesn't have to be commercial in order to be truly populist. (6)

Recently, several shows have indicated that non-network production modes can successfully reflect a truly Canadian reality. Creators had high praise for The Saga of Hal Banks, a documentary in the NFB tradition of social analysis; Anne of Green Gables, from an independent producer who blended high production values with a low-key, intimate interpretation of the Canadian classic; and The King of Friday Night, an inventive, privately-produced tape adaptation of John Gray's musical, Rock and Roll. Others cited the short-story adaptations initiated by Winnipeg's CKND as examples of quality drama produced in smaller regional centres.

iii) Film vs. tape

Because film has been so dominant, performance producers have made little use of tape: "I hate tape" was a common comment. They prefer film for its high definition, accurate colour and its overall aesthetic of realism and authenticity: film is the medium of record. Its supporters laud film's "humanism", and regret that their work all ends up on tape anyway for television. High definition receivers will narrow the aesthetic gap; in the meantime, tape is confined to essentially "real time" uses, even in electronic field production where the "point-a-camera-at-it" attitude wins out over interpretive technique.

But tape is far less "realistic" than film, and its use for information programming has contributed to an often-noted effect. Tape's immediacy, high energy and vivid coloration, in combination with sophisticated editing technologies such as the squeezoom, have made news and current affairs entertaining to the point of being "entertainment." On CITY TV, The National and

The Journal, the reality of the events is qualified by the aesthetic of the presentation format.

iv) Music video

Paradoxically, producers employing similar technologies with the conscious aim of entertaining, as in The King of Friday Night, have difficulty getting on the air. At the moment, only music videos fully utilize the tape aesthetic, and even then in a limited context:

> Rock videos are a fabulous demonstration of what the most expensive machinery can do -- in three minutes. So far very few musicians or producers are linking the technique to a dramatic statement. They bend an image sideways -- but it's not related to what's being said. (7)

However, to the extent that access is a factor, declining prices for electronic equipment and computer graphics will soon bring these technologies within reach of the smaller independent producers.

Whatever its limitations, music video has placed traditional genres in a new perspective: the variety show presenting serial performances may yield the market to the video's concentrated mix of those same elements. At the same time, by breaking down genre distinctions, videos are paving the way for program creators who want to mix media such as theatre, dance, music, painting and film.

D. Delivery Systems

i) Program diversity

Music video is only one among many new formats and technologies -- satellites, VCRs, Pay-TV, cable, pay-per-view, etc. -- that in themselves have enormous potential for increasing the diversity of programming. But the paradox of the music video -- viewed strictly as a delivery system for performers -- is that, left uncontrolled in the marketplace, it tends to narrow the choices available to audiences. Musicians said that those who have money -- and the backing of big record companies -- make more videos and get more airplay and make more money; those that don't, don't.

Many professionals believe that the same tendency applies to television programming delivered by cable or satellite, as well as to radio programming -- as in this comment from a multicultural producer:

> We try to satisfy everybody but our time is very restricted. The CRTC won't grant too many services such as ours -- any more competition and we would have to specialize. (8)

Without enlightened control, technology decreases diversity:

> You have to serve the country with strong codes to maintain the diversity of the system. As soon as private enterprise gets in the game, it centralizes the system. The satellites are centralizing the broadcast potential of the world: a station in Texas can be seen in Zambia. That's a profound centralization -- accumulating power in one spot. You should find a way so that a station in Brandon can have access too. But that won't happen, because the station in Brandon doesn't have the money. (9)

ii) Means and ends

It is impossible to predict what kind of programming will result when a new technology or format undergoes centralization. Pay-TV quickly shook down to a monopoly film channel which was virtually unregulated except for Canadian content requirements intended to increase the acceptance of Canadian films. But one Pay-TV producer stated that excessive repeats of inferior product have in fact been counterproductive in that regard. Furthermore, the intrinsic "family fare" nature of television in the home quickly eliminated the emphasis on soft porn which marked its debut. On the other hand, Pay-TV's need for direct audience feedback in the absence of ratings has led to a dialogue between audience and producer: one result has been new film formats such as murder mysteries in which the audience is invited to solve clues and compete for prizes.

For creators of Canadian programming, advances in production and delivery technology are of dubious value unless accompanied by some financial incentives to production or regulations that will offset both the overwhelming signal proliferation and homogenizing effects of market control. Without these mitigating factors, a full range of Canadian programming choices for Canadian audiences is not possible.

THREE: THE TECHNOLOGY

1. NW
2. McGill, 1, 5-6
3. Diehl, 1
4. Thomson, 17
5. Hausvater, 18-19
6. Taylor, 3, 10
7. Taylor, 3
8. Mielewczyk, 4
9. Thomson, 20

CHAPTER FOUR: THE IDEA

When creators were asked what areas of program production they would supplement first if they miraculously had more money to spend, a clear majority selected the initial phase: story development, script writing, pre-production. If they had to cut a budget, again that was the area they would protect. The feeling was not restricted to writers; the following comment from a director with substantial experience in making films for television is typical:

> I would hate to tamper with the story -- I would never sacrifice anywhere near the script. I often say, "I'll try to shoot in a day less," so I have to do more homework and be a little less finicky. I'm willing to sacrifice a lot in terms of production values -- if the story works, nobody's going to notice that I didn't use a crane. If I had a bit more to spend, I'd spend it on an actor or more rehearsal time to get the story right. (1)

A cinematographer added:

> It all goes back to who's writing the original story -- if it doesn't have that magic, it'll die a miserable death. (2)

I. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Program ideas come from a wide spectrum of creators: script writers, directors filming a concert, choreographers, variety producers, top 40 countdown packagers, and so on. As individual originators of ideas, their imaginations work on every conceivable subject; at the same time, viewed as a whole those ideas will have common elements of interest to both Canadians and the rest of the world:

> If the concept/script development stages were scrupulous in their standards of quality, I see no reason why our programming could not steadily earn its way on the international market. I think that our post-colonial, national-provincial, poly-ethnic dialogue -- i.e. what could be/should be the themes/subjects of the programming whether drama, humour, documentary, performance -- would be interesting and highly competitive in the English and French-speaking countries who share some of our history and therefore some of our present dilemmas and resources. (3)

Insuring that the free flow of ideas arises unchecked from its imaginative source and finds natural expression was the main concern of program creators. That ideal constantly engages pragmatic and often limiting realities.

A. Resources

i) Allocation

Ideas may arise randomly at any time and in any place, but production facilities exist in real space and time. Many creators felt that ideas should have priority, and that facilities should be allocated accordingly:

> I have no problem with Toronto originating ideas for the regions. What you have to have in any creative context is sensitivity, a sensibility, and an absolute loyalty to the essence of the story you're going to tell. That can happen with someone living in Toronto or someone living in the regions. The structure must permit a free flow of ideas so choice isn't made on the basis of staff or pragmatic factors such as proximity of resources. (4)

That ideal marriage of imaginative and practical resources rarely happens -- not for reasons intrinsic to the nature of creativity, but for what many interviewees termed "political" reasons in the broadest sense.

On the other hand, the impediments to that marriage were sometimes political in the commonest sense: apart from the general issue of regional disparity, several producers felt that "political considerations made it impossible for producers in Toronto to commission a Toronto writer to write about Montreal or Quebec.

ii) New blood

Many felt that the CBC is in danger of not recharging its creative resources:

> The CBC has a rather stale stable of writers -- that's a real nut to be cracked. You have to get people who are mature writers to write entertaining writing, but not screw them down to the mindless standards of L.A. (5)

The problem is not confined to the CBC; independent producers may also believe that form takes precedence over content:

> In Canada, wonderful writers have never been attracted to television or film. When Atwood's Surfacing was filmed she didn't write the script. Why? Because she's a novelist and as such it was assumed she wouldn't know anything about screenwriting. That is ridiculous. You've got to employ the best talent wherever you can get it. (6)

Creators who do seek expertise in radio and screenwriting often have no place to acquire it, especially outside central Canada. An established series, however, can provide important opportunities:

> The Beachcombers has an open-door policy on writing. I'll send a copy of the writer's guidelines to anybody who can show me some writer's credentials, and they'll give me a story idea. If I like it, I contract it. Even well-established writers have to have ideas approved and I've dropped a few "official"

> writers from before. I average about two new writers a year, and they help me take new turns and take risks. (7)

iii) Support services

Writers generally found ACTRA's jurisdiction beneficial, and although fees were considered low, royalty arrangements seemed fair. ACTRA's stipulation that a full fee must be paid if a project is cancelled after submission of a first draft is not only financially equitable to the writer but encourages producers to invest more time in the planning and script development which helps nurture talent.

ACTRA was criticized, however, for being too compartmentalized in its jurisdictions, especially in areas bridging information and performance programming. To a certain extent, creators saw this as a reflection of the CBC itself. Among several areas where originators of ideas found such divisions troublesome was CBC's archives: interviewees wondered why their contents were not made more accessible to creators of contemporary programming rather than being held for academic "historical" purposes.

B. Collaboration

When asked about budget cuts on individual programs, those most concerned about preserving the integrity of the original idea stressed the need to re-think the whole concept again. This in turn emphasizes the collaborative nature of the creative process in broadcasting, since revisions, to be successful, require input from all those working on the project.

i) Early input

Professionals urged that the traditional linearity of the production process -- script, financing, realization, etc. -- must yield to a more integrative approach if the results are to be successful. Over the past decade, the film and television industry in particular has grown to the point where talented creators no longer have to accept every offer -- and having a voice in creative decisions is important to them:

> When it's a one-off situation, a feature or anthology, there's no reason in the world not to bring the director in early to work with the script. But for some reason, whether it's fear of losing control or credit, or it's money and time, CBC producers are reluctant to do that. Most directors I know would be willing to put in time for free. I've just been offered a project based on an excellent book but I'm really disappointed in the screenplay. If I'd been called in a few months earlier, I might have suggested major changes and I could say yes immediately. As it is now, I may say no because there's no time for changes ... The casting is almost locked in, and I'm not too happy about some of the choices ... The way they set things up now they don't get the more creative directors. (8)

Collaboration and early input naturally tend to create autonomous creative units which disregard bureaucratic divisions and move easily between various artistic disciplines. Bergman and Fassbinder were cited as examples of artists whose creative teams were given substantial support by the flexibility of the public theatres and broadcasters they worked for. Their ability to bridge media and move readily between the public and private sectors was considered an advantage; companies like CODCO in St. John's and Cocolerio Umbrella in Toronto operate on similar principles.

ii) Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction can conflict with collaboration, and union rules are often used to protect individual interest: one performer who made unwelcome suggestions for script changes to a producer was told that if he objected again, the producer would lodge a complaint with ACTRA that the performer was overstepping his jurisdiction. Generally, however, writers at the CBC said they welcomed feedback and received constructive suggestions.

The need for collaboration is especially acute with inexperienced creators, but that situation can also stretch traditional jurisdictions. One radio producer who had encouraged new writing talent wanted to bring story editors into the studio for rehearsals so that if changes or additions were needed, the whole creative team could work on them. His organic approach was initially resented as the imposition of a "coterie," but objectors were eventually won over to the project.

One of the most rigid jurisdictional divisions is that between radio and television production. Very little effort is made to coordinate projects in the two media, except for simulcasting concerts. One radio producer suggested that the acquisition of literary properties should be a joint effort:

> We need more of Canada's talented and smarter people on radio -- more of our best writers and people from the pop media should know about

> radio's possibilities. CBC should be buying the radio as well as the television rights to literary properties and producing the radio version first as a pilot. You might even produce a good program that could make some of the purchase money back. That could apply to original scripts as well. (9)

Several of Canada's most successful writers are protean in their ability to adapt a story to several media -- and are often more appreciated for their versatility outside the country. One writer had a script which he imagined as a film or on TV, but he wrote it first as a radio play. The CBC balked at the cost of the soundtrack and he rewrote it as a stage play. When no professional theatre would produce it, he showed the radio script to the BBC, who gave it a full production. On the strength of that CBC Radio picked it up:

> It was like it had to be done somewhere else first. I had a far more enthusiastic response at the BBC than from the CBC. The story was eccentric and a bit risky, but they look for that kind of thing over there -- they didn't want to smooth it out and make it tolerable to everybody who just happened to be listening rather than make it really interesting to people who really listened. (10)

C. Training

Although everyone agrees that more training is needed, few agree on what kind. The problem stems from an inability to define goals:

> There is no training program of any sort at the networks ... You just go in, find out what you can, and then you do it. Somebody tells you it's good or bad, but there is no awareness of what the ideals are. They say they want a

> program like 60 Minutes or a dramatic program like Roots, but what does it mean in terms of this country? Roots is not the experience of this country. (11)

i) Experience

Veterans point out that, in the early days of radio and television, nobody expected an alternative to learning their craft by a "sink or swim" approach. There were informal apprenticeships and good people to learn from -- many of whom left the country in the 1960s and 1970s. Radio has retained a greater number of skilled professionals than television, but most are near retirement and few are taking their place.

Those former conditions do not pertain today, and some are doubtful that Canada has the teachers to do the job, despite initiatives such as the NFB's Dramalab headed by Allan King:

> With all due respect to Allan King, if you're talking about developing new filmmakers, new ideas, you don't use Allan King ... Bring in somebody from the States, bring in Spielberg for God's sake, bring in great people, not mediocre people ... Recently someone suggested that a trainee hang around me while I direct. That's absolutely outrageous. I'm floundering around, trying to learn how to direct -- I don't want to teach somebody my bad habits. And I don't want to learn from Allan King. I don't want to learn from anybody in Canada. (12)

On the technical side, supplementing the traditional expertise of the CBC are independent film crews, especially on American projects. But these have had negative effects:

> In Alberta and British Columbia there's lots of American films hiring crews and craft services, but there are no opportunities for writers or directors. Young people interested in film get

> hired on as technical assistants and get stuck. The training is all technical and job-oriented, with no emphasis on developing ideas, and when they get really good they go south. (13)

In articulating the needs of broadcasting today, professionals seemed divided into two camps: those who want more attention paid to the "craft" of radio and television, and those who want to prevent creativity from being trapped by too much craft.

ii) The "sausage factory"

An outspoken exponent of the need for more craft training is Don Williams, executive producer of The Beachcombers. He does not accept that an ongoing weekly series automatically creates bad art: "No matter how you slice it, it's always a sausage factory -- but it can still be artistic."

Williams also rejects the "chicken and egg" argument used to justify not spending money on training, and points to Australia's Film and Television School as a prime factor in the success of that country's film and broadcasting. He sees many "self-indulgent frauds" coming out of Canada's film and television schools who would be "shocked at what they don't know" about making television -- and surprised that they could still do good work there without compromising their integrity. In the absence of proper schools, Williams has used his show as an informal training ground but claims widespread support from all sectors of the industry for a "post-grad" school on the Australian model.

iii) Outside the Factory

The same schools which Williams characterizes as "artsy-fartsy" are dens of commercial iniquity in the eyes of others:

> The status quo of television writing is very poor, especially at the CBC, and a lot of those writers are teaching at film schools like York. What they're teaching is bad: they're media writers, not writers, they tailor to the American medium -- wrapping it up in a package, solving what is unsolvable in the last four minutes ... There are rules: a bit of action before the commercials, divide it into five acts, start off with a beginning that's slightly strange and catches attention. There's nothing wrong with that kind of writing -- it's just the proliferation of it that railroads good writers in that direction. It's become the weakness of the media. (14)

Just as Williams argues that no school addresses the demands of craft, others argue that none meets the demands of art -- though both sides agree that art and craft are common to all aspects of the industry. Documentaries at the CBC and NFB were seen as projects for learning both art and craft, but these institutions have cut back on documentary production. The NFB is also nervous about more cutbacks and resists production that might ghettoize it as a training center.

Although filmmakers who really want to will always learn how to, opportunities have diminished:

> The NFB is the only place that gives opportunities to try something on your own. Otherwise, kids aren't encouraged to hang loose, make small films and find out what they really want to do. Fifteen years ago we could buy a camera and put film in it and make a film. It's much more difficult now -- it's more expensive and it's not as acceptable. Now there's a system and you have to go through it. (15)

D. Time and Money

The lack of money to invest in new ideas is a major handicap in both the public and private sectors:

> There isn't enough money at MuchMusic to move talented people ahead fast enough. There were fifteen people on New Music who extended themselves at no extra salary to prove they could do MuchMusic ... If they could hire more people at the bottom, that initial group could now do more creative stuff. None of them is nuts about playing rock videos. They'd all rather be shooting a concert or a culture festival ... They have a national mandate to do other Canadian cities as well but the money just isn't there. (16)

i) Time Constraints

Money often translates into time, and one performer found that limited rehearsal time had given him the dubious distinction of being "the fastest choreographer in the West." Lack of airtime can also be crippling:

> We constantly make the same mistakes over and over again. We put our pilots on the air so we don't have time to experiment. Instead of taking a chance on something different, we end up with the tried and true, and it's boring. That's a real problem in variety -- it will take a lot of trial and error to find a whole new way of treating it ... I once had a chance to develop a series properly and I know how valuable the process can be ... I was able to test pilots with audiences and use all that information as the starting point for the series. It makes so much sense I can't imagine doing it any other way: no business in the world would start up products the way we make programs. (17)

Several creators used the growth of Canadian theatre as an example of how much time overall is required for the development process:

> Telefilm hasn't figured out what they are: are they trying to promote a cultural industry, or are they trying to be producers who show returns? If you're trying to do something worthwhile, it's not much different from the seed money that originally started Theatre Passe Muraille and Toronto Free Theatre. You had to suffer through dreadful shows because out of those dreadful shows you get your writers and directors and actors and ten years down the road you can be proud. It sounds rough on the producers, but the results for the theatre scene were wonderful ... They suffered through really bad shows, but in those bad shows there was great exciting stuff ... If we had the courage to do it now in film and television, I think ten years from now we'd have great filmmakers. (18)

When creators are given enough time to develop their own ideas, unforeseen benefits can result:

> Fifteen years ago there was no such thing as a Canadian theatre writer. They didn't have scripts to produce, but ... they found solutions. While the writers were off learning how to write, the directors and actors were creating the collaborative process, the collective solution. So we ended up with two things -- writers and a new form of theatre which is indigenous to ourselves. Nobody else does that kind of theatre. (19)

ii) Acquiring properties

More and more attention is now focused on intellectual property and its potential for adaptation in various media. However, creators without access to funds who do not want to be producers are at a disadvantage when they wish to develop a property:

> People who own a valuable literary property are offered lots of money, but the producer often just wants to take it and doesn't want their involvement. I say, "I like your book and I like your writing and I know how to put it on film, so why don't we co-write it?" It seems

> like a logical thing to do. But where are we going to get the money? We could spend two years of our lives finding it ... These initiatives should come from writers and directors, not the business people. As it is, if I want to initiate a project I spend half my energy doing the business end -- jumping through all the hoops and swearing to them that I'm a producer. (20)

Even producers who make preserving a work's artistic integrity a priority have difficulty raising adequate funds:

> For a year I've had an option on a book by a well-known writer. I've just decided not to pursue it because I can only get a certain amount from the CBC and only a promise from the Broadcast fund. The only way to pursue script development would be for me to go to the writer and ask him to do it for scale or take a deferment. I just refuse to do that. Every other industry has research and development as a built-in part of what you do. Ninety per cent of it doesn't work and ten per cent of it does. It's the part that money people in broadcasting don't understand and therefore don't trust very much. (21)

II. PROGRAM TYPES

Program creators stressed that live performances should still play a major role in programming. New technologies can overcome the financial objections to studio re-creations by allowing on-location shooting/recording of high quality. However, they warned against bringing traditional production techniques from the studio on location, emphasizing that live performance must be shot with the same expertise as the Saturday night hockey game.

Creators were also concerned with the growing trend on CBC to "report" on live performance in the context of information programming, rather than presenting the material in its entirety. Although they approved of including arts reporting with other areas of news, they objected to substituting it for the real thing.

The discussion in this section focuses on programs created especially for the broadcast media, with occasional reference to the recording of live performance where appropriate.

A. Comedy

Because comedy depends on eliciting a very particular response from its audience, a shortage of money and human resources limits the chances of targeting good material more than in any other genre:

> If I'm doing a 60-minute show I'd love to have 75-80 minutes of script so I can throw some away. I'd tape it all and put on the best 60 minutes. Otherwise you have to broadcast your mistakes and you become conservative, you don't

> take chances and only go with the proven writers or proven formats. A new idea may be off the wall and different, but if it doesn't work you're stuck. (22)

i) Sitcoms

As a recognized American format, sitcom has been produced in Canada for ten years. But several professionals who have worked in the genre on both sides of the border say the Canadian strain is inferior:

> The biggest weakness in comedy production here is the writing. If there were more money, I'd immediately set up one apprentice team of local writers and train them in the format of American sitcom, which is what I'm producing. The writing situation will continue to deter production -- you can't compare the CBC half-hours with what's done in U.S. commercial television. (23)

Nevertheless, several interviewees stated that, despite lower production values, *King of Kensington* and *Hangin' In* were successful and were enjoyed for the particularly "Canadian" qualities which they brought to the genre.

Although the producer quoted above feels that there is a lot of comedy writing talent in Canada, sitcoms seeking Canadian content status are prevented by content regulations from developing successfully. Because the peculiarities of sitcom were not considered when the regulations were drawn up, including an American co-writer on the "team" costs the program all its content points for writing.

ii) Group comedy

When asked to name an area for budget cuts, the producer quoted above suggested dropping a cast member -- a choice which highlighted the difference between the sitcom and group comedy in its Canadian form, where the writers are the same team as the performers.

Canadian group comedy is rooted in Canadian theatre -- both the "collective" mode of theatrical creativity, which was common on Canadian stages during the 1970s, and satiric revues such as Second City. Although groups such as CODCO, Royal Canadian Air Farce and The Frantics have had sellout successes in theatres and on radio, they have only appeared sporadically on Canadian television. After another unsuccessful attempt to get on CBC Television, CODCO is currently negotiating with an independent Maritime producer to package shows for distribution in the United States.

Television's inability to present these groups on their own terms, as outlined in the previous chapter, has left those who have not yet emigrated to a more appreciative United States baffled and angry. Although one performer remembers Denis Harvey publicly stating several years ago that "It's time we started laughing at ourselves -- you'll see CBC-TV having fun," he has seen little evidence of it.

Tastes in comedy are individual and complex, but what annoys Canadian comedians is the enormous gap between public and "official" approval of their work. Several suggested that because radio sharpens issues and television heightens personalities, their political satire was not welcome on a public television network reluctant to offend its masters. The double irony is the the "officials" who disapprove of it for general consumption often seem to enjoy it themselves, but assume that their own tastes are too sophisticated to be representative. This intellectual paternalism is especially prominent at CBC network, and comedians felt that no genre suffers more than comedy from patronizing attitudes towards the regions.

B. Drama

i) Dallas

Dallas has become a touchstone for the dominant form of broadcast drama, the soap opera: the show reflects what one producer called "the disease of our age -- for one hour we look through the keyhole into the lives of the rich and famous and breathe that air." The vicarious nature of Dallas leads to intense personal indentification and powerful fantasies in inverse proportion to the economic deprivation of the viewer: one radio producer reported that playing out scenes from Dallas was common among native women in the north.

Although many creators referred to Dallas and its imitators, no Canadian parallels were cited. Empire, Inc. came the closest, but its mythologizing of history and its clearly defined "cultural markers" made it a show-in-itself. On the other hand, CITY-TV has taken the logic of Dallas one step further: by televising informal "off-camera" exchanges about the personal lives of its hosts and commentators, the station produces an "on-going soap opera" which involves the viewer not just in the programs but in their creators as well.

ii) Series vs. anthology

"At the moment, the magic word is series," said one producer. However, apart from The Beachcombers, there are no long-running dramatic series on Canadian radio and television. Some script writers rue this situation, blaming short runs for a series' inability to establish character identification and viewer loyalty. However, the pressure to produce a minimum number of programs for syndication sale is a key factor in long-running series production, and those markets have been relatively unexplored by Canadian producers.

Interviewees were ambivalent about the levelling effects of series production. Several found the dropping of Anthology from CBC Radio symbolic in that it removed a market for writers but also reduced anthology programming and the "one-of-a-kind" writing that many feel brings out the most creative work from a writer. In that respect, made-for-television feature films -- and films partly financed by the Broadcast fund with a television window -- also preserve opportunities for creative "anthology" writing. One Pay-TV programmer found that pay audiences were lukewarm to series, and his contracts often include the right to recut miniseries -- adding one more script/shoot possibility to the various formats which feature films and their creators must address.

iii) Theatrical drama

Several creators argued that the most popular "drama" shows like Dallas were not really dramatic at all in the sense of acting out dramatic situations. They are actually moving picture versions of People magazine, and the real drama is elsewhere:

> If television does not develop in dramaturgical terms, in terms of the writing itself, the medium is going to turn completely to visual videos and

> information. That's why you have no program that can equal 60 Minutes or that type of show. They carry enough drama with them that whenever you see a "dramatic" show its either too mellow or too far-fetched. (24)

Canadian drama's production values are considered inferior by American standards but alternative treatments are rare:

> What bugs me about Canadian television is that the medium has never been employed to stand on its own. It comes from a very defeatist point of view and it says, "We don't have the money for a one hour show like they do at CBS and therefore it's going to be bad." But the best television drama I've seen was not expensive. What could be expensive is that you need more rehearsal time, you need more time to cast or you need to have the right actors. The better TV stations have a TV company, they have actors that work on the camera together for a long time, then they can produce decent stuff ... To exhaust the potential of the medium is not only a technical occupation, it has to be a humanistic occupation. (25)

iv) Documentary

There was repeated enthusiasm for the documentary and its potential for dramatic use:

> When I think of drama I think in terms of the documentary too. It's a wonderful legacy and we should use it rather than be ashamed of it. People are turning away from documentary because when documentary was at its height ... there was no intellectual thought in it. If the subject was exciting the documentary was exciting, if it wasn't, the documentary wasn't. You have to think to be a documentary filmmaker: a lot of people aren't willing to do that so they don't make documentaries any more. (26)

A basic premise for creators working on documentary drama is that the documentary always takes a point of view:

> The documentary is not a completely objective art form. What good does Hookers on Davie do? It only exploits hookers. It doesn't tell you why these women have ended up where they are -- for example, because of the economy. The way the women are perceived all ends up in their being where they are: it doesn't teach anybody anything, it just reinforces as a matter of fact. (27)

Working from the assumption that news and current affairs contain powerful dramatic material, one radio producer has experimented with five-minute playlets following news broadcasts which provide point of view and context for current events. In an attempt to illuminate the past and make it relevant to the present, he has also dramatized biographies of Canadian historical figures such as lesser-known sports personalities, and then set up open-line interviews so that listeners can talk to the characters.

Several interviewees felt that the rejection of documentary has led to a wholesale rejection of contemporary material as a source of dramatic programming: one television director pointed out that stories about inner-city life and racial conflict had been ghettoized into current affairs documentaries because of their social import but had great dramatic potential as well, if treated properly:

> Your basic television audience is not interested in the old-style documentaries. But I've evolved from that tradition, and started to think of it in dramatic terms: how do you set up a dramatic transition from one person to the next -- can you move away from just talking heads? For example, you can place the subject in an ironic situation that relates to what's been said and ties it all together: the documentation of New York today in Brother from Another Planet is like that. (28)

C. Music and Dance

Variety has traditionally been the format for presenting popular music and dance. But its rapid dissolution is a symptom of major changes in how these areas are being treated:

> Variety is at an impasse -- there aren't any viable commercial shows maintaining an audience. It's so segregated now -- circus shows, skating shows, etc. And with the video market happening, it's difficult to generate interest ... Variety has evolved more into films -- the dance film, the rock star themes. The big screen is the only place capable of maintaining that fantasy of larger-than-life proportions. Variety today needs to be bigger than the little TV to get an audience. (29)

i) Mass appeal

Music programming on radio has also reached a crisis, as both public and private sectors experiment actively with new formats:

> The nicest compliment I ever get is "I never listened to this music before -- you're the first person to play it." That's the responsibility of all broadcasters, to keep a balance of education and entertainment. We should always be stimulating, provocative. We should push the listeners -- they need it, they want it -- but you have to do it in a clever way. You can play Stockhausen at a certain time of the day, but only in the context of the pieces you play before and after. You can play the worst music too, and also get people to listen. The main rule of radio is never let the listener know what's coming next. (30)

This independent producer questioned many shibboleths about private radio: for example, he has had great success in syndicated music packages which include a high percentage of spoken documentary, in contravention of the belief that young audiences don't want talk with their music.

Many interviewees saw significant potential in music video, but felt its current applications were very limited. Finding ways to use the techniques in larger dramatic formats at reasonable cost was a major challenge: adaptations of John Gray's musicals Billy Bishop Goes to War and The King of Friday Night, as well as Leonard Cohen's I am a Hotel, were considered pioneering successes. Using whole albums instead of singles is also a possibility for developing the dramatic potential of popular music.

ii) Classical

Creators of classical or "high-brow" programming were very conscious of how vulnerable their work has become as programming adjusts more and more to ratings. At the same time, they hold their predecessors partly responsible for their present dilemma. There was strong criticism of the CBC for not investing time and money in making traditional and contemporary classical work more accessible to a wider audience:

> We need location shots, proper editing -- we're making a movie, not a recording of a dance ... If dance is to survive on television it has to be a lot more interesting than just a recording ... There should be more innovation and fun in the way it's used as entertainment. We're also doing mystery and comedy dance films: they almost fit into commercial variety or drama, but they're still "art." (31)

However, there was also praise for CBC's Arts, Music and Science division for now recognizing these problems and taking steps to solve them.

Once classical programming is aimed at a broad market, the possibilities multiply significantly:

> Generally, music on television is really boring and so at best what you get is a taped concert where you just cut from one prominent soloist to another ... Rock video is a wonderful source of raw materials to help provide insight into classical music ... We hope people can enjoy our films on Bach and not get uptight about it. There's an intimacy, but it's not like the traditional documentary -- we get inside the orchestra, see rehearsals, people making mistakes, interacting -- we try to make it more human. (32)

D. Poetry and Prose

Part of CBC's original mandate was to encourage Canadian culture by showcasing the work of its artists -- in the days of radio, that meant writers and musicians. Although that mandate still holds for musicians -- and has to some extent been formalized in collective agreements -- the corporation's commitment to writers has been reduced largely to promotion for authors publicizing new books. Short stories which formerly may have been read on air are now more likely to appear in adaptations for drama on both radio and television.

However, there are creative forms, especially on radio, which incorporate poetry and prose -- both fiction and non-fiction -- within unique categories peculiar to the medium. The radio plays of Beckett and Pinter were cited as works that used sound in special ways, often onomatopoeically, and whose effects could only be fully communicated on radio. Performance poetry and soundscapes like Gould's The Idea of North are also ideally suited to radio, and many creators felt that there was little money available to develop production of such works, and little interest in making them accessible to wider audiences.

III. CREATIVE FREEDOM

A. Restrictions

All interviewees recognized that many restrictions, both explicit and implicit, surround Canadian broadcasting. These range from direct censorship of words and ideas to broad economic and social factors discussed throughout this report.

i) Censorship

Certain language is not acceptable in broadcasting, and to that extent the realistic portrayal of certain milieus -- and the issues arising from them -- does not appear on radio and television. At the CBC, regional distribution is seen as an advantage over network in this regard: one radio producer was able to broadcast in Montreal a play about prison conditions which had coarse language in it, but the show was refused for the network.

Generally, creators felt there was more freedom to choose subject matter in the regions than on the network. Interference by network in program creation was deeply resented: one producer was ordered to play a songlist drawn up in Toronto on a regional drive-home show instead of the local music he had been featuring -- in an area where, as one technician said, "You could count the yuppies on the fingers of one hand."

Performance programs dealing with contemporary political issues are virtually absent from Canadian broadcasting. The system is especially silent on French-English relations, and attempts to combine the two cultures in terms of subject and personnel are not encouraged. In other areas, the CBC's influence on program ideas is considered benign; as one director said, "Aside from having to mix the film twice to get rid of three 'fucks,' the CBC never once said that something had to be taken out or changed."

Of more concern to performers especially have been ACTRA's attempts to legislate working conditions with regard to pornography and obscenity. Several interviewees felt strongly that these issues should be dealt with by the individual creators in a specific context, not in collective agreements. The emphasis on collaborative decision-making in this regard reflected the overall point that censorship issues are less likely to arise when all creators in the production process are involved as much as possible from the onset of the project.

ii) Production and scheduling

If the production process is not well-planned, feedback from collaborators can result in a compromise of the original idea:

> It's an eternal series of compromises and I never know whether to fight it or say "Well, O.K., if that's what you want, here it is." But panic and hysteria develops as the production deadlines creep closer and it's difficult to keep a critical distance. Producer hysteria always blames the script for anything that goes wrong. So I just say, "Sure, we'll get rid of all those characters and I'll add these new ones." But that's hard on the script: it's much better to have longer periods between drafts, to make sure that it all holds together at least in one person's mind. (33)

One successful television writer regretted that he did not write in another medium first so that he could at least once have the pleasure of seeing the final product the way he wanted it.

Creators rarely have control over cuts and changes that occur for "format" or technical reasons. Rights to final cut stay with the broadcaster: parts of a program may be cut because it "turned out too long" to fit a half-hour slot -- especially after commercial inserts. Several writers criticized the CBC especially for adhering too rigidly to the half-hour or hour time slot: more consideration should be given to allowing a story its natural time flow and filling around it with other material. And all recognized that a public broadcaster, under less pressure to show visible return for investment on the screen, exercises the ultimate right of censorship by not broadcasting a program at all if senior management disagree with their subordinates' decisions.

iii) Commercials

The majority of the participants felt that commercials were detrimental to program quality, and that the CBC should not have them.

However, many accepted them as a necessary burden in private broadcasting -- and, to a much lesser extent, in public television as well, given the current political realities. If commercials must be included, most felt that their placement and frequency should be taken into account at an earlier stage of the production process, not taken entirely out of the creators' control. But, as was pointed out earlier, they were also aware of how that knowledge can shape the writing process in its earliest stages, often to the detriment of the final product:

> There are so many commercials it breaks your heart: you can't believe that it's going to break after that scene -- couldn't they wait another five minutes? I didn't get a memo on commercial breaks until about ten weeks into editing with four weeks to go. I would have preferred to know ahead of time -- but there were so many of them, after every second or third scene, knowing beforehand might have just depressed me. (34)

B. The Producer Role

Originators of ideas have become more aware of the censorship and interference imposed by infrastructure considerations such as format and commercial breaks. One writer was very upset that a drama originally scheduled to play in two parts was shown all at once without consultation. Because he had written the second half with some recapitulation of the first, the quality of the show suffered to the point where he feels such issues should be dealt with in future contracts.

Many writers felt that they couldn't place their best ideas and wasted a lot of time trying to: "I spend more time writing proposals than I do making programs," was a typical observation. Even those who found it easy to place ideas and were generally satisfied with the final result wanted a lot more control:

> I'm looking around for projects to option myself which I can control as a producer. At a certain point you reach the breaking point and you don't want one more thing screwed up. If it's got to be screwed up, I'll screw it up myself. (35)

But very few writers and directors felt they could become producers too under present conditions and still retain their creativity:

> I feel I could turn out a better script if it was something I had initiated and developed ... But I don't want to be a producer -- I can't afford the psychic destruction ... And nice people that I trust, producers that I like and admire, they don't last very long because they're not sleazy enough. (36)

Not only does producing use up time that could go into creating, the financial conditions under which bodies like the Broadcast Fund invest money discourage multiple roles:

> In order to do this film, I had to be a producer to begin with. I couldn't do it as a co-writer, I had to be a producer who hired a writer. I couldn't pay myself as a writer, although I was spending an awful lot of time on it as a director-writer. There's something wrong there. The only answer is to just give the project to the NFB. At least they'll pay you for your time -- but you can't own it. (37)

The troubles which independent writers and producers face in dealing with the broadcasting system are forcing many to examine other distribution outlets. Several mentioned bypassing broadcasters by direct syndication of their product through private marketing -- an option more readily available, for obvious financial reasons, to radio rather than to television creators. In keeping with the trend in information programming to present snips of live performance programming from another medium, one independent producer has begun to think of those radio programs which do get broadcast as "advertisements" for his "real" work, which he would make available on cassette. That process in turn would have significant effects on the "promotional" material he created for broadcast, as opposed to what appeared on the cassette.

FOUR: THE IDEA

1. McBrearty, 13
2. Fresco, 21
3. Taylor, 3
4. McAndrew, 4
5. NW
6. Hausvater, 14
7. Williams, 10
8. McBrearty, 5
9. Guettel, 17
10. NW
11. Hausvater, 16
12. NW
13. Wheeler, 10
14. NW
15. Wheeler, 10
16. Taylor, 2
17. NW
18. NW
19. Lynch, 12
20. Wheeler, 22
21. NW
22. Abbott, 14
23. Gillard, 1
24. Hausvater, 14
25. Hausvater, 16
26. Bailey, 15
27. NW
28. Fresco, 20

29. Hyslop, 2
30. Pritchard, 3
31. Ditchburn, 6
32. Sweete, 3
33. NW
34. NW
35. Bowie, 16
36. NW
37. NW

CHAPTER FIVE: ACCESS

I. SELLING THE IDEA

Many professionals believe the Canadian broadcasting system as a whole is reluctant to invest in the exploration and exploitation of program ideas and human resources. In the area of live performance, full coverage has been reduced in favour of reporting about the event. The shift typifies an attitude present in other programming areas as well:

> News and current affairs will cover K.D. Lang but they won't do anything for the next K.D. Lang. We will cover what's happening after it's bubbled to the surface. We're not going to help, stroke, aid, develop people along the way ... We may do the band struggling to make its mark in Alberta, but when it's done, it's over. You may visit them again when they've signed a contract with RCA Victor, but in the interim we've done nothing ... We are following the wants and dictates of the audience in this area, rather than leading them. (1)

Without a solid mandate to support these efforts, broadcasters have ended up limiting access, especially to new talent and ideas:

> It doesn't happen any more that the broadcasters go out to clubs, stages, concert halls and theatres to discover new acts and talk to them about being exploited. Most programmers now wait to be approached -- in fact, they don't even wait, they resent being approached. They don't return your phone calls. There's no equivalent to the artists and repertoire division in the record industry. The stars in our country are the newscasters and hockey players -- they're the ones who get five-year contracts ... It gets tougher and tougher ... I get scripts all the time, and I want to help the writers, but there's

> no slots for them -- if you're a comedy writer, where the hell do you go? (2)

Closed doors incubate self-fulfilling prophecies:

> Freelancing doesn't really exist on radio -- it's all done inside. It's also very difficult to persuade them to employ new actors or composers. When you ask why not they say, "Well, the guys we always use are radio actors." And when you ask why are they radio actors, the answer is, "Because they've done radio for years." (3)

A. The Public Sector

The following comments refer mainly to the CBC; in certain instances, they also apply to the NFB, whose role as a public-sector co-producer is hotly debated at the moment.

i) Competence

Several creators felt that the CBC has lost the ability to recognize talent and good ideas:

> You assume that a part of management skills is to see the potential of something -- to look at a rough cut and know what a rough cut is. But in this department they obviously didn't know what a first assembly is ... In one meeting they said, "The quality of the next one you do for us is going to have to be better than the last, and I said, "In what way?" And they said "It just didn't look very good, the colours weren't very good, it was kind of blurry." I asked "Well, what generation were you looking at?" They said they didn't know and it turned out they were looking at a fifth generation video and didn't know that they deteriorate. Like we're sitting there with our mouths open. That kind of thing occurs a lot. (4)

The same writer found that, even when one hand of the CBC agreed to an idea, another might not:

> The CBC was already in to do the show. However, as a point of form, the script had to be submitted for a reading by the department that reads scripts and recommends them. We already had a deal but we had to put it through there and they rejected it. They thought it was just dreadful -- they didn't seem to know it was originally a stage play. (5)

Those who had worked as CBC managers felt that recognition of talent was constantly compromised by torn loyalties: lacking clear-cut goals, faith in themselves and true authority, managers had difficulty seeing the worth of an idea on its own terms instead of in relation to the corporation's image and their role in developing it.

On the other hand, creators recognized that there were built-in limitations to freedom:

> There are certain kinds of films that you do with a public institution like the NFB and certain kinds that you don't ... They can't make outrageous films and I don't think they should be asked to ... I'm sure they would argue that the artists who get the money can do whatever they want with it, but when it comes right down to the crunch, they can't. (6)

ii) Empires

Empire-building was considered to be out of hand within CBC management. But instead of addressing the damaging effects empire-building has in a bureaucracy, senior management has instead tended to diminish the power of those strong decision-makers who should be allowed to build autonomous units. John Hirsch and Peter Herrndorf were frequently cited as examples of acknowledged innovators whose success was considered threatening to their superiors. And as the fortunes of managers rise and fall, program creators move in and out of favour, making the long-term development of talent impossible.

At the other extreme are the managers who feel powerless to say either yes or no and leave creators in a limbo where they do not know whether to take the idea elsewhere or not -- only to be told at the last minute by the person they're dealing with that the decision has been referred to someone else.

The obsessive self-importance that results from too much concern with territory makes managers oblivious to the needs and concerns of others:

> I have no loyalty to CBC: as a matter of fact at this point I'd like to say to hell with them ... for this film, after a couple of months of calling we finally got a meeting with a senior manager in programming in Toronto. My executive producer and our NFB liaison were all in different parts of the country and we flew down to Toronto and had to stay overnight. We get to the CBC, walk into the office and the manager says "How long do you think this will take? I actually shouldn't be here. I've got a union meeting." $2,000 for three people to go there. Our NFB liaison got pissed off at him and said "Sit down!" But that's their attitude. No wonder people want to dump all over them. (7)

iii) Local and regional access

CBC's reduction of local and region-originated programming in recent years has made access very difficult. With limited slots available in the schedule and no authority to issue broadcast letters, some regional managers seem to have given up:

> The problem at CBC here is just getting to see them. CBC has no money to do anything and they have a completely closed door. You can't even see the head of programming. I find it

> outrageous that they're public servants and they don't even answer their phone or answer their mail. It's so irresponsible. I don't know how they can be so busy when they're not doing anything. So I just went to a program director I knew at a private station to ask for a broadcast letter and he said over the phone, "Yeah, sure, I don't even have to see it." (8)

Those that haven't given up become angry and frustrated:

> I'll start with an idea with the head of drama here in Vancouver, and we'll start developing the idea among ourselves and he'll say "Yeah, let's go do it," and then it just won't happen. He doesn't understand why himself. He gets very angry about it. It's very common. (9)

Anomalies in regional budget allotments make it difficult for producers to use local talent: Halifax and Winnipeg have radio drama while Vancouver does not, and yet Vancouver has built up expertise in the area over the past decade. Regional producers are also significantly affected by macro-cycles in the local economy: just when a city seems ready to make the quantum leap up to another level of production capacity that might stabilize the industry, a recession will hit and opportunities vanish. The broader and more secure the financial base, the more doors that can be left open -- at least in theory.

Writers and producers in the regions generally feel that access to Toronto and Montreal has improved, although once hired they often find they must spend a lot of time in the larger centres working on the project. Those who don't find the telephone a congenial instrument are at a clear disadvantage. On the other hand, there was appreciation of efforts by the CBC and NFB to expand and upgrade their regional facilities, especially in the

Prairies. And again there was high praise for strong individuals who were not cowed by their superiors and stood up for "the troops":

> There's a new facility here and a person in charge who is very ambitious and capable. For example, the Cityscapes program was her idea ... She argued that ... we could do a series on Canadian cities and they sort of laughed in Toronto and she said we could do it and it turned out to be surprisingly popular and effective. She's fought for a slice of the pie and is using her slice particularly well. (10)

B. The Private Sector

i) Stations and broadcasters

There were few complaints about the way private broadcasters dealt with ideas from program creators. The basic difference from the public sector was that ground rules were clearer: without any obligation to cultural mandates, the privates hire and fire on the basis of accepted business practice. Their initial openness to suggestion was doubly welcome after the CBC's aloof and dilatory responses. However, creators also recognize that the private sector tends to believe that only programming based on American models will sell; to minimize risk, co-productions with American or British producers are virtually mandatory.

There are significant exceptions to this rule, notably the success of Winnipeg's CKND in adapting Canadian short stories for television drama. Apparently motivated solely by a love of literature and theatre, CKND's producers have retained artistic control over their films and contributed significantly to local production.

However, in order to keep producing they stress that the Broadcast Fund must modify its recoupment policies by extending repayment deadlines and agreeing to take second position after those producers who actually make the program.

CKND's program director considers that local stations working with independent local producers would be an ideal situation for generating programs from the regions. Several stations, including CFAC in Calgary, ATV in Halifax and CITY in Toronto, have followed CKND's lead. CKND also encourages cooperation with local NFB producers and use of the Board's facilities, but its attempt to reduce costs by co-producing with the local CTV affiliate was thwarted when several CTV prairie affiliates grouped together to rationalize production.

Because private network affiliates have more freedom than CBC affiliates with regard to production investment, such groupings may provide more access to individual creators who otherwise would have to sell ideas to Toronto or Montreal. Larger independent producers like Atlantis have become Toronto-centric in their operations, and it is generally felt that long-distance dealings with them are discouraged. However, it is also acknowledged that the central Canadian connection can be a profitable gateway for other parts of the country interested in accessing international markets.

Because radio production is much less expensive than television, cost-sharing is not as important a factor for affiliated stations who wish to initiate non-network projects. Independent producers are already generating syndicated material with prepaid advertising for satellite distribution to individual stations. But one independent producer believes that CHUM, Selkirk and Moffat exercise tight control over the programming of their individual stations and discourage granting airtime to independent producers, whom they regard as potential competition at the network level.

ii) New services

Few program creators see real possibilities in this sector of the television market: the new cable channels from the United States have all been imported on preferential terms that provide little incentive to produce Canadian programs. In cases such as MuchMusic where Canadian content is a visible component, most feel that the distribution benefits are still not worth the price of access.

Creators are angry that the CRTC has done so little to insure that a proper portion of revenues from this sector goes into program production. However, representatives from the sector such as First Choice programmer Paul Gratton argue that the terms upon which it was established are irrelevant, partly because the U.S. competitive pay model was used as a guideline, and partly because the sector has departed so quickly from all the predictions first applied to it.

According to Gratton, in three years as a pure discretionary movie channel First Choice/Superchannel has delivered some basic truths about the sector. The first is that, without sufficient inventory and production funding, Canadian content regulations are counterproductive because they alienate audiences by requiring excessive repeats of the same material. Secondly, contrary to expectation, the movie channel has become a family channel so the types of films it can show are limited -- again increasing the repeat factor. Thirdly, dramatic series and several other formats are unsuitable for Pay-TV, and it is therefore to the licensee's advantage to generate production: "We want to be a major trigger," says Gratton. "We want to feel that the project wouldn't have happened if we weren't there."

But First Choice claims insufficient subscriber penetration to engage in script development and production on its own. Also, the CBC initially discouraged film producers from dealing with Pay by insisting on exclusive broadcast rights: although the CBC has modified this to a demand for first position, its attitude has had negative effects on access. Finally, Pay is not eligible for money from the Broadcast Fund, even though Pay-TV has a particular format and relationship with its audience that creates a demand for a particular type of program which might not sell anywhere else.

Since a discretionary service represents a major initiative in terms of profits and production, several program creators felt that no more licenses should be issued pending a new legislative and regulating framework to stimulate production and revise the terms of license, and a thorough re-evaluation of the sector.

II. MONEY AND FACILITIES

A. Co-production

From the creators' point of view, every production which they do not finance entirely by themselves is a co-production -- even programs financed solely with bank loans fall in this category, and the conditions of repayment will to some extent influence the final product.

Because the success of a production is so often measured in commercial terms, whether or not it is planned as a co-production can have a definite effect on whether it gets produced at all. The more investors a production has, and the more money that goes into it overall, the better its chances of being made -- and sold.

But access to money is often secured at a price. Although television production is demonstrably a highly collaborative venture, the kind of cooperation sought by co-producers may run counter to the intentions of the creator who originated the idea. In order to satisfy a perceived audience demand, foreign co-producers may claim the right to cast a leading role in return for their participation. These deals reflect trends in the international film industry, and are not considered necessarily detrimental to the creator's original idea.

However, as several professionals pointed out, financing through casting can shape the story: in The Campbells, a co-production between CTV and a Scottish television network about Scottish immigrants in pioneer Canada, it is hard to tell whether the story or the financing came first. For creators in both radio and television who can juggle co-production demands without compromising the idea, the money made available in this way improves access; for those who feel they must retain complete artistic control, the trend towards co-production means limited access to financing.

B. The Broadcast Fund

i) Eligibility

Because the Broadcast Fund was established to help the independent film production industry, its selection of projects will naturally tend to benefit that sector. Many professionals believe that the Fund favours larger-budget Hollywood-style features:

> If you work through Telefilm, you have certain limitations ... If you have to give your script to a reader, that reader is part of a cultural clique that you then have to become part of or your film won't get made ... You have to go to the right clique to get what you want, and at Telefilm only main-line films get funded. (11)

Other small producers were not so sanguine about eligibility:

> It's the usual struggle to get in. The larger companies, Primedia and so on, have the contacts and get in first. It's the old game of who you know. (12)

The Fund's emphasis on investment and recoupment has restricted the films it finances to traditional, low-risk ventures. Several filmmakers disputed the Fund's assessment of sales potential, claiming that certain areas such as cultural programming should be funded not only in their own right but because there was a large international market for them.

The Fund's investment bias has forced creators to become producers in order to apply successfully. Not all want to do that, and many consider that their ideas suffer for want of time and energy. Furthermore, experience and creativity in themselves have proved to be inadequate even for top-quality producers: puzzlement and anger have greeted the news that a universally respected director and producer like Ralph Thomas has left for Los Angeles because he couldn't get Fund approval for his projects.

ii) Consistency

By far the greatest problem with the Fund is consistency: its lack of financial insulation against the whims of policy has undercut the credibility of its financial commitment to many projects. Small producers especially have had to scramble at the last minute to keep a production rolling. As the Fund's major licensee, the CBC has also been erratic in its commitments to independent producers, severely undermining its credibility as a dependable partner in production.

Creators also find the Fund's indecisiveness with regard to its eligibility criteria a major threat to the security of long-term planning. At one time, documentaries were eligible, but now several producers of films which bridge documentary and performance have difficulty accessing the Fund: one producer managed to get funding for several films on Bach only by applying for them as "variety" films, not documentaries.

The Fund's financial instability stems directly from the uncertainty of its policy objectives. Although the point-count system is supposed to reduce the possibility of bias in judging applications, several professionals claimed that the Fund does not understand its mandate sufficiently to follow its own rules, sometimes changing its mind at the last minute after giving the go-ahead. In one instance, a producer had lined up a co-production deal with an American producer on the agreement that a certain role would be played by an American actor. At the last minute, the Fund reversed its decision -- even though the project had been eligible on point count -- and told the producer a Canadian had to play the part to get its money. The co-producer withdrew, and the producer had to re-mortgage his house to start the shooting.

Given the fact of "cultural cliques" and inconsistency regarding point counts, many creators wish that eligibility for the Fund could be based on alternate criteria, with a special emphasis placed on high quality.

iii) Sufficiency

Creators are pleased that the Fund exists, viewing it as a significant acceptance of basic realities in the broadcasting production industry. For many smaller producers, the Fund provides valuable resources in fund-raising expertise and especially in establishing distribution links with international producers and distributors. There was strong support for placing the Fund's resources solely at the disposal of creators producing primarily for broadcasting, and for allowing radio producers access to it as well.

Creators urged the Fund to expand its role as a cultural investor. The Fund's primary goal is to stimulate

Canadian production, from research and development to distribution. It cannot do that in a satisfactory way if it is also concerned with getting a return on its investment. Creators feel that if an idea has merit and its initiators have demonstrated cultural and financial responsibility, the Fund should have enough faith in the excellence of a project that it should be funded: the chances of returning investment on excellence may be just as good as projects with "demonstrable" commercial potential. Several pointed out that commercial success on the American networks was achieved only by massive waste, an option not worth considering in Canadian broadcast production. More specifically, they wanted the Fund to put more "cash-cash" up front on the basis of considered excellence and drastically extend the deadline for recoupment. One producer suggested setting aside a certain amount for regional production, with a sunset clause if it was not utilized.

There was a general feeling that the Fund should be available to all private producers of Canadian programming, whether broadcasters or independents. In the area of music videos, for example, financing is almost impossible without the support of large record companies who often impose artistic controls. VideoFACT, the recently established private sector fund, does not give out substantial enough grants to alleviate this problem. If the Fund's goals were broadly defined to include all production, creators saw no reason why it should not fund music videos or any production intended for Pay-TV and specialty cable channels.

C. Studios and Equipment

i) CBC and NFB

In periods of cutback, self-protection becomes a dominant factor in restricting access. Within the CBC, facilities are fought over and jealously guarded: although it is recognized that producing The Journal needs the kind of technology acquired for it, there is widespread resentment that money was taken from other programs to do so, and that the equipment cannot realistically be made available to other producers. Over the years, successful producers overcome limited availability by hoarding resources. But the result is an assumption that their perception of limited resources holds true overall: it is significant that several talented and successful CBC creators had reached the conclusion that, not only were they at the CBC limited in their choice of resources, but that the resources themselves, including talent, were limited in the nation as a whole.

Meanwhile, the CBC's difficulties in rationalizing its resources results in the anomaly of large, expensive facilities such as the Vancouver television studios remaining underutilized. In the absence of directives from management, initiatives to re-deploy resources and permit access for creators across the country to CBC facilities are often taken by individual producers. To some extent, restrictions on access to resources are the result of union efforts to protect job security. But those efforts are counterproductive if they limit creativity so far that the institution as a whole no longer commands respect for its products. The issues of flexibility and job security cannot be resolved on their own terms. CBC creators overwhelmingly agreed that the underlying issues were clear definition of the corporation's mandate, and the need to re-evaluate its structure and technological resources in light of that mandate. Once those areas have been redefined, new suggestions for jurisdiction and flexibility will arise from that context, allowing both management and labour to find new compromises for old problems.

ii) The independents

Insensitive and restrictive regulations by both unions and management have made access to major production facilities at the CBC and the NFB difficult for independent creators in all professions. In many cases, freelancers must get "temporary employee" status, which forbids flat-fee contracting between them and the independent producer. At the NFB, six-week breaks after six months of work are mandatory for freelancers, wreaking havoc on production schedules; in order to evade this restriction, freelancers have to incorporate, at which point they can be hired on contract rather than sub-contracted. ACTRA's restrictions on non-union participation severely limit the freedom of regional producers. And freelancers whose fees go up more than 15% in one year can only be hired after special approval from the Treasury Board.

A further stumbling block to allowing independent creators access to production facilities is the lack of precision in costing budgets. Because many independent creators have limited resources and can only bargain with the potential value of their idea, informal exchanges of resources often do not get clearly accounted for in dollar terms: a first window may be traded off for studio access, but neither side of the deal can be quantified accurately.

The problem is especially acute at the CBC, where departments have been reluctant to detail indirect costs even to their own in-house producers. With CBC allocations under constant downward pressure, efficiency is at a premium; at the same time, effective measures of efficiency may reveal infrastructural problems that are presently incapable of solution.

Independent producers find their access to CBC facilities increasingly restricted by union jurisdiction, and by the corporation's unwillingness to acknowledge hidden costs. The following comment by a radio producer applies equally to television creators:

> It's not possible, for me at least, to do a project completely outside the CBC without the cost becoming prohibitive. In real life I still have to count on certain CBC-provided facilities: a quiet, soundproofed studio for voice pickup and any live music recording; studio links with remote locations; record, reference and tape archive libraries; wire services and long-distance phones; contracting of additional talent (actors and readers), and so on. And so there's an informal, semi-spoken agreement to exchange resources. Now for small projects -- a single *Ideas* or *Sunday Morning* or *Morningside* feature -- this ad hoc arrangement is workable ... But some more formal structure, a recognized symbiosis, is needed to protect all the parties and to define revenues and responsibilities ...
>
> I sell my own programs abroad *as the only way of making them pay*, and have put together deals with "shadow" parallel budgets that

> allowed me to get programming for CBC by having another network, for example, pick up part of the (usually travel) costs ... There is little or no accommodation for this practise in the formal contracting procedure at the corporation, though the CBC clearly benefits from it ... Though the corporation will say that there is a clear policy of not accepting freebies, they still do, quietly. This practise should be open, acknowledged and accounted for, and even trumpeted as a way of doing the state-of-the-art things that have become impossible for the corporation on its own. If freebies or discreet collaborations are not to be accepted, money will be needed to make up for them. (13)

Radio professionals in both the public and private sectors stressed the need for more facilities to boost production and lower the costs of syndication.

By costing out the value of access to institutional facilities, independents can then make meaningful decisions about how to fund their overall budgets: they may decide that a comparable service provided outside the CBC, for example, may be more favourable. To the extent that ideas may be sold to the corporation on the basis of facilities made available in an informal -- and more binding -- manner, there is a noticeable effect also on the type of idea that will more likely receive approval from the CBC and the Broadcast Fund. It is possible, for example, to correlate the large percentage of historical period dramas in independent television production with the large critical mass of set and design resources at the CBC made available to their producers.

FIVE: ACCESS

1. MacLean, 17
2. Abbott, 30
3. Hausvater, 12
4. NW
5. NW
6. NW
7. NW
8. NW
9. NW
10. Mitchell, 10
11. NW
12. NW
13. NW

CHAPTER SIX: PRODUCING THE IDEA

I. THE PRODUCER ROLE

A. Producer Talent

As the prime mover and coordinator of program creation, the producer is often accorded the major role in the production process. This is largely a function of financial clout: the more technologically complex the production process from radio to television to film, the more power and artistic control resides with the producer:

> More and more filmmaking in North America is a producer's medium, and even if the director does end up getting a lot of input, the economics make it very difficult ... That's the constant battle and the constant challenge. I don't think it's going to change ... There were three or four producers on the set some days and a certain amount of interference, but that really does go with the territory. If they raise the money, they're not going to give you the power -- the bigger the budget, the more they control it. (1)

The extent to which producers' financial power is matched by their creative inspiration was questioned. Producers were sometimes viewed as "Hollywood prima donnas" incapable of fruitful collaboration. The good ones frequently leave the country:

> We are sadly lacking in decent producers -- the terrible pity of it is that when we get good ones, they get frustrated and leave. Producing in the arts means combining business and creative decisions. We're not making shoes here. Most producers have no creative abilities, and their business abilities are nothing to write home about either. A really good producer like Vivian Leebosh can get on the phone at six in the morning and start dealing with the unions

> about how many drivers they have to have on the set. She'll beat them down from seven to two, just on chutzpah. Then she can sit with the writer and the director and make intelligent creative suggestions and improvements ... There are one or two others like her but not many. And now we've lost Ralph Thomas and Leebosh because in the last three years they couldn't get a film off the ground -- Telefilm wouldn't back anything. (2)

Apart from their competence, producers were criticized for not encouraging co-workers in basic human ways:

> A lot of producers find it difficult to say "You've been wonderful, thank you" when sometimes you are ... There is an element in producership that's really lacking in this town -- generosity of spirit ... I seem to amaze people when I thank them -- they're not used to being thanked. I try to create conditions where I will get thanked, because it helps to keep me going -- the pat on the back is often more important than the money. (3)

However, several producers take special care to actively involve their co-workers, encouraging evaluation sessions after working on a production and, in one case, voluntarily submitting autocritiques to an immediate superior on a regular basis.

As long as production -- especially in the private sector of television -- was at a low level, developing producer skills was a hit-and-miss affair: as several pointed out, "If you don't use it, you lose it." In the regions, the lack of opportunities and facilities is compounded by fatalistic expectations from critical mass exponents who claim production there is impossible. However, many interviewees believed that desire would find an incremental way to overcome these obstacles:

> There's an energy associated with a given collection of people. It works in quantum leaps: the way up isn't steady, but when you get enough people, bump! You're up another level. And that sets a precedent, breaks up and rearranges a pile of negative expectations like "Oh, you don't do that in Winnipeg." Whereas in central Canada, all those expectations have already been re-arranged, so that the paths are there, making it easier. (4)

A frequently mentioned need in radio was more studio space, especially as syndication becomes a real possibility; at the CBC, some network producers have made a point of producing certain programs with a particular regional relevance in that region in order to give local producers more experience.

B. Efficiency

i) Public vs. private

The debate as to whether public or private television production is more cost-efficient has been fueled by the Broadcast Fund and several spectacular successes from independent producers such as Anne of Green Gables. The following discussion presents various arguments pro and con; if any very general conclusion can be drawn, it might be that in the Canadian film and broadcasting environment there is a budget level -- perhaps slightly more than $1 million -- at which public and private sector production is equally efficient. Below that figure, public sector indirect costs compete poorly against a small independent company; above it, the American film production model, based on substantial risk capital for high production values in the hopes of commercial success, tends to induce inefficiency. In the latter case, individual exceptions are certainly possible; in the former instance, very little can be done about indirect costs short of a massive restructuring of the public corporation, or individual acts of heroism: one CBC radio producer made headlines by travelling regularly from Vancouver to the Prairies by bus and train in order to save travel expenses.

The case for private production was succinctly stated by an independent producer:

> The guiding principle for a small business operator working in a volatile market is to keep overheads to a minimum level necessary for day-to-day operation. Expenditures of a long-term nature, whether staff or capital equipment, can be justified only on the basis of predictable return. The accumulation of large, continuing overhead reduces the capacity to flex with market demand, either in type of service or volume of service ... We believe that the essence of operating a creative business is to keep administration to a minimum and permit the wide flexibility in hiring specialist creative talent to meet the needs of specific projects. (5)

In an independent operation, it is automatically assumed that artistic freedom coupled with a competitive urge will make long hours bearable:

> When I'm on a film, I'm often working 18 to 20 hours a day. Any union situation forbids that. But if you're excited by what's happening, you just want to spend all that time on it. You have to have that desire. Otherwise, the lack of enthusiasm shows on the screen -- it's dead, lifeless. (6)

In a small production company, personal ties will be closer and many support services, such as promotion, may be provided free of charge.

However, several professionals remarked on the high burnout rate in the private sector ("gerbils on a treadmill" was one comment); working conditions were especially stressful on technicians, whose services are provided essentially at the bidding of others:

> The biggest drawback is the hours. You never know far enough ahead of time whether you're on or off. There are guidelines in the agreement for setting schedules -- they're supposed to be posted at least a week ahead. Your days off are locked in, but otherwise the hours keep changing. It's very difficult, especially with small kids -- you keep adjusting your social schedule around your work schedule. (7)

Many remarked on staff inertia within the CBC, although the general feeling was that overall the CBC still employed many talented and motivated professionals:

> On-staff producers told me it would take me six years to learn how to do a radio drama. I was only there for a year -- I didn't have the time. If it took me six years to learn, I wouldn't get anything done, because coupled with that piece of information about six years was the notion that I shouldn't do anything for the first six months. (8)

One veteran writer with extensive experience in both public and private production commented on a private feature he had worked on recently:

> I look at the screen and I don't really see where the money went. It was getting pissed around like water. There's a cliché that the government and a bureaucracy don't have the discipline of the bottom line, but I've never seen them pissing away the bottom line, whether it's on office space or whether it's in the way the production is handled. Things are

> always right to the bone: they're shot in less time, they're done pretty efficiently. On that private feature, I saw inflated actors' salaries, limos, hotel suites instead of rooms. Telefilm had very little control over production costs, and when I asked the producer about it, he said, "That's how it's done in L.A." (9)

The writer quoted above had just been involved in what might be an optimal CBC project from the viewpoint of efficiency: the budget was just over $1 million and the inefficiencies often attributed to CBC unions working in deadening studio conditions were in any case absent from the more stimulating film environment.

A prairie director had a different experience with a film partly financed by the Broadcast Fund:

> Originally, I wanted to do it for $900,000. That way I could keep control and use the local people I'd worked with over the years. But the Broadcast Fund said "No, no, no, you have to up the production values to make it commercially marketable." So I got a co-producer and the budget went up to $2.5 million. The money bought talent and a larger, more experienced crew, but that meant less shooting time and it didn't have the soul, the feeling of people coming together to make a big film just with local talent. The technicians we got were used to big-budget American films: they got nice affects quickly, but they were used to a certain lifestyle -- catering from Vancouver, strict working hours. We all had to join the big unions, and those people who originally wanted to work cheap or for free, couldn't work on it. Performance is always a top priority for me, and there wasn't enough time to rehearse ... Next time, I'll make sure the production priorities are very clear from the outset. (10)

One performer made an analogy between the sudden leap to prominence of certain independent and regional productions, and the performance of an understudy taking over the lead in a play: suddenly expectations are challenged, and a new perspective appears. After that, the performance finds its natural level. Similarly, the quantum leap into prominence in the past few years by independent television producers has rearranged expectations; however, it is too soon to tell what their natural level of performance will turn out to be.

ii) Security

The fundamental economic parameter for television drama in both public and private sectors in a limited domestic market like Canada is international sales. That involves risk and, to diminish the burden on producers, professionals urged that public funding bodies such as the Broadcast Fund and the CBC increase their investment in production and delay demands for recoupment.

In other areas of performance programming on both radio and television, the marketability of the program is not so much a factor in providing financial security. Most important is that performers reach a wider audience, thereby stimulating the production cycle of recordings, videos, concert appearances, film projects, etc. Quantity of programming is crucial to generate more income, but only live programming can give exposure at reasonable production costs. On radio especially, producers can reduce royalty fees by replacing recorded music with more live performances. In cases where the talent is local, performers will often reduce their performing fees in exchange for more exposure.

Personal security in the form of jobs and/or assured salaries plays a significant part in the attitudes of producers towards their work. Although independent producers sometimes scoff at CBC producers, claiming they have sacrificed creativity for security, several indicated that if an extra 10 per cent were suddenly added to their budgets, they would take some of it for themselves -- mindful of their families and the vagaries of the national economy, which in one case left a producer with no income at all in 1982-83. On the other hand, the following comment came from an independent producer who said that in the event of a 10 per cent budget reduction, she would take it off her salary:

> I just hope that we can continue making films -- I really do. That's all. That's all I want to do and I don't want to be rich, I don't want to be famous, I just want to make films. Films that have a use, films that have an audience. I wouldn't be making films about culture if I didn't think there was an audience there. (11)

II. THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

A. Budgeting

In theory, the profit incentive makes investors in private production live up to their financial commitments. For the CBC, annual budget appropriation instead of a five-year base makes long-term planning hazardous:

> A two-hour drama occupies about 18 months, from proposal through the processes of planning, filming (or taping) and post-production to readiness for air. In an atmosphere of uncertainty -- where will the cuts come next? -- there are built-in obstacles to creativity. The chief obstacle is that, working so far ahead, a producer works steadily with imponderables. The CBC works that way, because of its short-term financing in a business requiring long-term planning ... It's a hell of a way to run a TV network. It's also extravagant -- the more realistic planning I can do as a producer, the more efficiently -- and creatively -- I can function. I'm a reflection, in miniature, of the corporation. (12)

Although any budget could be expanded in creative ways, producers agreed that insufficient amounts are usually allotted for pre-production costs such as travel and rehearsal time. Several stressed the need in drama for proper preparation with actors. One choreographer found that on a CBC Superspecial with a budget of several hundred thousand dollars, actual shooting time was only four and a half days: he ended up working 18 hours a day, and felt that his performance suffered as a result.

Performer fees were considered low, and more money -- not only to pay available performers more but also to hire more costly talent from elsewhere -- was a frequently expressed wish. The situation with regard to technical expertise, especially cinematographers, was quite different, and has seriously affected availability of talent at the CBC. The corporation has been priced out of the market for talented craftsmen such as cinematographer Vic Sarin, who received his training at the corporation. The Broadcast Fund is the cause of the problem, though not to blame:

> The fee parameters were set long before Telefilm, during the evolution of the private industry ... Now suddenly, there's a real industry because of Telefilm. But Telefilm didn't set those fees: they were already there, and Telefilm is helping that production, so it all goes hand in hand. (13)

B. Casting

i) Canadian content

There was considerable disagreement about Canadian content regulations on casting:

> Canadian content is a can of worms. Basically, deep down in my heart of hearts, I don't think there should be any -- on the other hand, we clearly have to nurture our own talent. I'm trying to cast a show with three male leads, all in the 23-24-25 age range. There's a whole raft of kids in Hollywood -- the Brat Pack, they're wonderful actors -- and it's driving me crazy. At a pure artistic level, I've put whatever I can into this script, but you're working with your hands tied behind your back. There're so many terrific people around that you can't use. But how you can open the gates and say it's a free market? I don't think you can, so ultimately there's no real solution to it other than that I should go to Hollywood. I can't come up with a magic formula for satisfying both needs here. (14)

Content regulations may backfire unpredictably: one producer claims that in a co-production situation, the tendency to cast a non-Canadian lead to attract financing undermines the purpose of the regulations and only encourages the star system -- with its attendant inflated budgets -- which many professionals would like to avoid.

The CBC's all-Canadian casting has led to a different kind of prominence for featured actors:

> I'm a great fan of CBC casting. I know a lot of actors bitch about it, but I think they're very fair. People complain that CBC doesn't make stars, but I don't think it's the function of the CBC to do that, except on radio with Gzowski where people like that hold the programs together. Suzuki's fame on TV isn't the popular kind of stardom. The CBC should play a part in giving people national prominence, but it's more important to give them good work -- if you do enough good work, you just appear. Actors like Ken Welsh are slowly creeping into valid prominence, instead of being artificially inflated by a publicity-driven star system. (15)

But the Broadcast Fund, by approving budgets on the Hollywood production model, is presenting more attractive commercial opportunities. A professional involved simultaneously with a CBC and a private feature noted:

> One actor was offered a pretty good role in the CBC feature -- not a lead, but a good solid acting role. It would have given him 6 to 7 days of work at the absolutely top dollar CBC could pay -- about $5,000. Simultaneously he was offered another part in the private feature, as an extra -- about three speaking lines in the whole film. You see him in the background in a lot of scenes and it required him to be around for ten days, for which he got triple or quadruple what the CBC could pay. I said to him,

> "As an actor, surely the other part would be much more interesting." He said, "No doubt, but I've got three kids and winter's coming on and what do you want me to do? I hated it, it was a useless part, I don't have any lines, but I'm getting paid $2,000 a day." (16)

CBC casting was appreciated for its more humane treatment of actors:

> At the CBC, even if people are half asleep all the time, they're always very sweet and take the time that independents just can't afford. They pat your make-up on and say, "It's nice to see you again!" (17)

At the same time, performers felt that casting producers were under political pressures not to offend minorities:

> The topper was this last thing I did for CBC. My original character name was Rabitch, Dr. Rabitch. She was one of the less sympathetic characters and her name was changed to Harley. One day, the producer said, "Well, we just changed the name to Harley because Rabitch was too ethnic, too Jewish-sounding." Had it been a goody-goody I guess perhaps a Jewish doctor would have been O.K., but they are so deathly afraid. In a nutshell, it's reverse racism now at the CBC. (18)

Producers casting in the major production centres have an abundance of choice, and can implement ad hoc training for actors by mixing novices with veterans. In the regions, the opposite is true:

> There's an active theatre community here, and a lot of acting talent. But the economy makes such a difference -- two years ago I could have cast entirely from here, but so many of them have left because there isn't enough theatre work for them now. (19)

C. Location and Design

As production moves away from studios to location shooting, the need for careful pre-production planning increases. Although plant overheads no longer have to be accounted for, extra money should be allocated for lighting and sound technicians to do preliminary work on location and reduce costly post-production adjustment and remixing. Location shooting and recording means more community liaison and an improved image for public corporations if care is taken in these negotiations.

Studios are less expensive in relation to overall radio budget costs than they are in television. In times of economic restraint when the tendency is to program as cheaply as possible, the use of studios on radio increases. The talk show format, made so successful by Morningside, is a prime example of this trend, but many producers feel that it has dominated CBC Radio:

> We have more good radio producers than any country in the world -- people who excel at recording real sound with real people in a real setting. You can't just restrict your formats to people who walk in to the studio. (20)

Although studio use and set design may become less common on television, demand for extensive costume production facilities will remain high, especially if the current trend towards historical dramas continues. For these productions, the CBC retains a distinct advantage over independent producers: a large design resource allows for last-minute changes at minimal cost, while independents have to plan much more carefully to avoid high incidental expenses. In fact, as one interviewee pointed out, although CBC may have high indirect costs built into budgets, independents for their part have to budget a significant insurance margin to cover those incidental costs not incurred by the CBC.

D. Post-Production

Processing, mixing and editing are the most centralized aspects of program production. Except for a few dedicated tape setups, the CBC's post-production facilities in Toronto are universally decried and only utilized as a last resort on many programs.

For the regions, sending film to Toronto or Montreal for post-production means a significant loss of artistic control. To retain that, and to encourage local facilities, several producers make a point of giving all their work to local industries and monitoring them closely to insure high quality. But smaller centres are more vulnerable:

> A giant complex -- sound stages, editing, lab and sound recording facilities -- was planned for Calgary several years ago. A lab and recording studios had already started up in Calgary three years ago when we were planning to film in southern Alberta. Because of the economies that would accrue (and not incidentally because it is CBC policy to use regional resources) we hoped to use those facilities. We had tests done at the Calgary lab and the results were so bad that the lab itself had to acknowledge its inadequacy to the job. We did use the local sound recording facility -- a false economy as it turned out. We had to re-record on our return to Toronto. So far as I know, neither the lab nor the sound recording studio is extant in Calgary, and the giant complex is no longer a notion, never mind a reality. We did use local actors and musicians almost exclusively -- to our and their benefit. But the Alberta boomlet in film production had gone bust. (21)

E. Unions

Almost all the professionals interviewed belonged to a union or guild, and a more complete discussion of the topic in relation to the CBC can be found in the chapter on the corporation.

i) Principles

Quite apart from labour/management relations, there was considerable ambivalence about unions in relation to the creative process:

> The great thing about film and theatre is it really is a cooperative effort, a collaborative effort ... Actors are in danger when they see themselves as just someone hired to do what they're told -- I don't think they're much good to anybody. We had a squabble at ACTRA a year or two ago about censorship. One of the problems I had was ACTRA's built-in attitude that assumed we had no say on the set. I never think of it as being "us" and "them", I think of it as a group of us that come together, then there are dividing lines so that we can each do our own job. I thought ACTRA set up a barrier, a fighting attitude that is not healthy in the arts. I can see the necessity of having an association, but when the association is setting up that kind of barrier it's very dangerous. (22)

Although the benefits of collective bargaining were generally recognized, especially by members of ACTRA, there was strong resistance to collective action, even among members of unions such as NABET which have been traditionally viewed as militant:

> I'm no friend of the unions. I've battled them over the years as much as I've battled the CBC. Once a member of my union I'd never seen before walked in the front door and said "You're all out on strike" and he pointed at me and said, "You -- out!" I said, "Fuck you, no one walks

> into my job and tells me to get out. I don't even know who you are." I sat there for about three hours until management came over and gently urged me to leave, please. I'm a human being, not a functionary to be ordered around by some guy I've never seen before in my life. (23)

ii) Radio and television

Producer/technical staff relations varied considerably in radio and television:

> There's no area where CBC technicians are more divided than between TV and radio. Technicians are much more into radio. They're loyal to the show, they're part of the process. They don't featherbed -- it's all lean, no fat. It's odd to have technicians on standby, they're so overworked. The more difficult and exciting the job is, the more the technicians are challenged -- and they can be very innovative. (24)

Program creators who have worked in both media confirm the animosity between the two production staffs:

> On television there's practically a commitment to the theory that the average age of the viewer is nine, and that they don't read newspapers so don't do anything that will require any intelligence. Produce everything six months before air time, try to do five shows in two days and -- Hey! Have fun! ... They assigned a production team from producer on down in which maybe 10% had heard our radio show. Not only had they no particular knowledge of it, but they kind of dismissed radio as, oh yeah, that's radio, you can't do that on TV. It got to the point where you had to explain the jokes. The most supportive person was the set designer. (25)

There was general agreement that television, especially in studios, gave less scope for technical craftsmanship than radio unless the shooting involved innovative performance programming. Challenging work such as hockey games and any live event shot on location greatly improved working relations between technical staff and producers.

iii) Restrictions and flexibility

Union restrictions and work-to-rule practices varied considerably from region to region and sector to sector. Where contracting out presented major problems, invariably communications between unions and producers or management were poor or nonexistent. Where unions appeared flexible, producers seeking to hire out first consulted informally with union representatives well ahead of time so that when the formal request was made it was handled promptly in the best interests of the work at hand. Also, union grievances were not automatically referred to head office but dealt with promptly. A common comment from both performers and technicians was that they would bend any rule or work at scale for a good producer.

Outside the CBC and CTV, technicians enjoy good relations with employers, and one interviewee felt that having a number of unions competing in the same jurisdiction made them more responsive to the needs of a particular project. Many producers found that dealing with technicians on equal terms had significant results:

> When I first came to Vancouver, I would ask technicians what they thought of something after we'd done it. It took them ever so long to say anything, because they weren't used to being asked that. They were just button pushers and that was it. Being asked to make a creative assessment of what we had just done was unheard of, but now they do it all the time. (26)

With both sides eager to do the job well, it is easy to compromise:

> The technical staff can be quite flexible -- it's all unspoken. A few people were clock watchers, but I disarmed them: now what

happens is if we finish early, then they go early. They'll skip a 15 minute break because they'll be finished early and get an hour and a half lunch. It all evens out. There's no place in this kind of work for the attitude of the musicians union -- ten minutes of every hour you have to have a break, so you look at your watch. (27)

SIX: PRODUCING THE IDEA

1. McBrearty, 9
2. Lynch, 8
3. NW
4. Thomson, 12
5. McAndrew, 1
6. Fresco, 14
7. NW
8. NW
9. NW
10. NW
11. Sweete, 23
12. Locke, 2
13. Bowie, 21
14. NW
15. NW
16. NW
17. NW
18. NW
19. Wheeler, 27
20. Guettel, 8
21. NW
22. NW
23. NW
24. NW
25. NW
26. Juliani, 14
27. NW

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISTRIBUTION

I. FEEDBACK

A. Finding the Audience

Although program creators are pleased with the expanding opportunities for their work, they are concerned that it is often unavailable to the Canadian people; as one said, "We don't have ourselves yet as audiences." There is a strong need to make definite contact with audiences and come face-to-face with the community that nurtures them. The problem was especially acute for independent producers and performers, who have no access to the feedback broadcasters do receive. And because program diversity is limited, many sectors of the public, especially in the fine arts, are not represented in the broadcasting system.

Taking charge of distribution is a key to solving the problem:

> Until you control the distribution you're just being a fool. This is the only country in the world that is not in proper control of its distribution system. People seem to think that as soon as you start putting percentages out, you then eliminate everything else, but you don't: you're just increasing the Canadian content, and it'll filter through the whole system. People who scream and say they should see whatever they want -- they're right and they will see all those other things, but they'll see more of our stuff too. They must stop letting all those dollars go out of the country for those foreign programs: show them, but at least make some money from them. Until we do that, we're not going to have an industry. (1)

i) The regions

Outside central Canada, the problem of distribution is compounded by factors that further reduce the access which audiences in the regions have to the works of their own program creators. There is great resentment that CBC network controls so much of the broadcast day on both radio and television, and that regionally popular programs such as The Wonderful Grand Band in Newfoundland cannot be seen in their own region. Professionals pointed to an official schizophrenia in this regard: in the north, where preserving indigenous culture is a top priority, every effort is made to make native programming available and to encourage feedback. Creators in the regions wonder why the same logic is not applied to their areas, or indeed to the country as a whole.

The concentration of audiences and financial power in central Canada has a ghettoizing effect on programs and audiences in other regions. In Winnipeg, the program director of CKND stated that the market value of the drama programs which the station developed at great expense dropped considerably if he decided to show these works by Winnipeg creators to Winnipeg audiences first. In Edmonton, nobody saw the works of a local director on a series produced by Atlantis because it was sold to Global; she herself had not seen the final product after the mix:

> I really envy the Quebecois: we don't have the kind of culture that keeps that cycle going. The centres are so much in Toronto, and Vancouver to some degree. There's no great sense of who the western filmmakers are. (2)

The same director rented an NFB screening theatre to get responses to a roughcut of her latest feature: the experience left her "giddy", because she so rarely gets to sit in an audience watching her own work.

The lack of constructive feedback in even the largest cities outside Toronto and Vancouver can give filmmakers false impressions about their work:

> The smaller the place you live in the smaller the feedback -- it's not the amount you get, it's the quality. I'm not challenged by the feedback of my peers here. Sometimes it's detrimental: at the NFB, one of their problems is they tend to make films for filmmakers, because they have no proper distribution system ... I want as many people as possible to see my films: if I showed it to a group of my mother's friends, I would take what they said more seriously than what I was told at our local NFB. (3)

ii) Reviews

Although creators outside central Canada might imagine that more attention is paid to colleagues there, often the opposite is true. The number of features written about Canadian creators does not reflect their achievements:

> I think media feedback is often what's lacking -- primarily in the form of good critics. I'm sick of seeing American TV and film get front page coverage on our entertainment sections: of course people don't know what Dinah Christie's doing these days -- or R.H. Thomson, etc. etc. So I guess if the audience were exposed to more information about us maybe they'd be more interested in watching us. (4)

The tendency of the Canadian information media to downplay Canadian culture means that reviews are hard to come by:

> It's hard to get reviewed. I did a For the Record that was quite unusual, good things in it, and it got buried by the CBC. Nobody in Toronto reviewed it. I'd prefer a review, even if it's critical -- then at least people know it's happening ... The Atlantis shows I worked on have been getting better coverage in the United States than up here -- a big piece in the New York Times -- but very little here. They got raves playing up against Spielberg's series, and nobody up here knows that. (5)

B. Ratings

As a measure of audience feedback, ratings did not rank high with creators:

> Ratings are hard to define -- they're so dependent on what's put on in front of your show, what's after, what's opposite. And if they use you for a filler, forget it. (6)

Professionals who had worked in the United States found that ratings in Canada gave no sense of demographics, and overall very little qualitative as opposed to quantitative feedback. On the other hand, a producer of one long-running series found that the CBC's audience research department could come up with valuable information over the course of several years. Creators were particularly apprehensive that the CBC appeared to be increasingly dependent on ratings to justify its existence, especially on highly-promoted one-off features like Charlie Grant's War.

C. Royalties and Fees

As the tangible expression of feedback, royalties are the other target of Canadian content regulations: not only are they intended to increase exposure and appreciation, they try to provide more income for Canadian creators. Apart from the universal problem of copyright and its proper application to royalties, significant objections were made to Canadian content regulations on the grounds that they did not achieve their purpose with regard to feedback, tangible or otherwise. Because they do not address the problems of production and distribution in the cultural industries, they can in fact be counterproductive.

This is especially evident with regard to broadcasting when it is viewed as a delivery system for music. For broadcast purposes, production location earns as many content points as composition. As a result, a "Canadian" song may end up as a dollar drain to the U.S.:

> When Anne Murray sings "It Ain't Me, Babe" it's called Canadian content because she recorded it at Eastern Sound in Toronto ... Every Canadian station has played the hell out of that song because it's Canadian content. Every time it's played, $1 or $2 or whatever goes to Nashville, to the guy who wrote the song and to the publisher. So the more that song is played, no matter how many great profits the station makes, it's a dollar drain. Anne Murray is a deficit to our economy ... (7)

Many musicians who are struggling to survive have found that content regulations do generate more exposure and royalties up to a certain level, but that the mechanisms such as CAPAC for collecting them are unreliable and inaccurate. And because the Canada Council rarely concerns itself with the commercial potential of an artist's work, many classical and "serious" contemporary musicians whom they support are ignorant of possible revenues accruing from various royalty arrangements. To keep artists in the country and allow them to profit from their success, the Council is now educating them in this regard.

i) Local distribution

Private radio stations often refuse to play music unless records are available in the stores. The rule illustrates the subservience of private radio to the demands of the music industry at large; as one performer noted, it is the record companies who now make the stars, not the broadcasters.

Several professionals pointed out that the only way to put more new and local musical talent on either radio or television was to guarantee distribution of a record or video within the immediate market:

> The rotation system, the phone-in system and big money dictate the situation. A video by a new band from Queen Street goes into ultra-light rotation on MuchMusic, it gets a little play late at night, and that's the end of the road. They've got no money or a record company signs them into an ironclad deal on their terms -- which means nothing for the cultural life of this city. (8)

The reciprocal nature of the music industry and broadcasting underlines the fact that, without stimulation of production and equal access to distribution, regulating content to achieve cultural goals is only partially effective. To the extent that an analogy can be drawn between broadcasting as a delivery system for film as well as for music, the same holds true for visual programming as well.

II. NEW DELIVERY SYSTEMS

A. The Lessons of Pay-TV

Since its inception in 1983, some of the expectations program creators had of Pay-TV with regard to distribution have been clarified. Perhaps the most significant observation is that, in the absence of precisely defined jurisdictions for the public and private sectors, Pay competes with CBC for programming generated by independent producers. This has been most obvious with regard to films intended for broadcast: because First Choice/ Superchannel is still below its initial subscriber projections, it cannot compete with CBC for the most advantageous windows. By placing strict limitations on the terms of the license fees which independent producers can accept from Pay-TV, the CBC reduces the exposure of the very product which the Broadcast Fund was established to promote.

As Pay acquires more subscribers, it will have more financial clout to compete with CBC. Without expansion in the distribution sector such as a new outlet to reach a mass audience base, the result will only be higher license fees to the independents and a more costly product aimed at an international market, instead of more production that is more widely available in the domestic market. Already First Choice is suggesting that the only way to make Pay-TV viable in Canada is to link in to the international pay networks. The same trend may also apply to new discretionary services as they become available.

Pay offers other distribution benefits to program creators, however. First Choice is flexible with regard to theatrical releases for films, and can adjust to a producer's release schedule, including the launch of a videocassette. However, one creator felt that a pay window "lobotomized" marketing efforts by placing the product in a distribution limbo.

B. Syndication

Syndication is not a new delivery system, but independent producers increasingly see it as a primary distribution mode for strips. Syndication used to be synonymous with American network reruns, but now producers are selling directly to stations and cable networks:

> The initial U.S. market for Check it Out is first-run syndication, not network. If we're successful, it could really open up markets in the U.S. for Canadian comedy productions like this one. Syndication in the U.S. is a way of producing new programming for what is in effect a fourth network. To do that, the shows have to be of the same quality as those on the three basic networks. (9)

The producer quoted above suggested that direct syndication was partly the result of independent producers breaking away from the artistic control of the three basic networks. At the same time, the networks and major studios are attempting to vertically integrate their operations: the networks have increased in-house production in defiance of anti-trust laws, while 20th Century Fox recently acquired the Metromedia broadcast chain.

In Canada, where ownership of the radio industry is concentrated among three corporations, syndicators are challenging their control. In packaging a series, one producer initially negotiated with a CHUM station announcer before deciding on someone else; although forty-two stations across Canada have bought the series, every CHUM station he has offered it to turned it down.

C. Hardware

i) Satellites

The effects of satellite delivery are complex and far-reaching. From the viewpoint of program creators -- and independent radio producers in particular -- satellite delivery is becoming a viable option whereby a program can be sent directly to the audience with a minimum of middlemen.

For roughly $100,000 per annum, one radio producer has already leased a Telesat transponder for Canada's first private satellite radio network which delivers syndicated programs three hours a day. He is also discussing the possibility of a private uplink, whose cost of $50,000 he intends to share with other independent producers. After initially demanding cash up front for the transponder rental, Telesat's leasing arm is now operating on a deferred payment basis.

The adoption of the same satellite technology by both television and radio tends to reduce the differences between them in other areas as well. The relatively lower cost of radio production and, until recently, the diversity of programming on CBC Radio, have downplayed similarities in their evolution. However, as satellites make radio syndication more feasible, independent radio producers, like their television counterparts, will need access to production supports such as the Broadcast Fund.

ii) Cassettes

Similar parallels in production and distribution modes are evident in cassette technology. Just as home recording of television programs on VCRs allows audiences flexibility with regard to program scheduling, radio producers are suggesting home recording of radio programs off cable.

There is a possible parallel also between videocassettes for sale or rent and sound cassettes of radio programs. One Pay-TV programmer suggests that a movie shown on a pay channel and a simultaneous video release can be to mutual benefit, with the pay window helping promote the video. One radio producer who was discouraged because nobody besides himself and half a dozen friends ever heard his programs, felt that it might be more lucrative to market them on cassettes and use a radio program as a promo.

III. MARKETING AND PROMOTION

A. Resistance

Program creators noted appreciable resistance from potential purchasers for their product, mostly from Canadian buyers in the private sector who felt that Canadian product was not commercially viable. Among the reasons cited for this reaction was the traditional reliance on cheap American product, which usually generates good profit. In television, the bad reputation Canadian films acquired during the Capital Cost Allowance days of the 1970s and the excessive repeats of mediocre Canadian films on Pay-TV were also factors. Moreover, the divisions between the public and private sectors are so engrained in the Canadian broadcasting environment that private buyers rarely consider that CBC material might be popular enough for their audiences.

The psychology of content regulation has also contributed to this negative effect:

> I'm very much against regulating exposure. I don't mind licensing people and have them pay for a license to print money. In return they should be giving the industry something back. I would rather tax and invest -- you can't force talent into the marketplace. It's such an absurd notion that you can bring success when it's not really wanted. It's not just a question of if you play this, people are going to want it. There's this feeling that, "Well, actually, there's nobody really good in Canada. It's just that the government makes them play that stuff." It doesn't give the system much credibility. (10)

There were numerous stories about the reluctance of

Canadian buyers to purchase Canadian product -- only to suddenly show interest once a sale had been placed in the United States. One independent radio producer was unable to sell a syndicated Canadian Countdown Top Forty program to any Vancouver station: the program is now available in the area from a high-power station in Bellingham across the border. Generally producers stressed the need to break into the U.S. market, not only for recoupment but to set an example for conservative Canadian buyers. The CBC, First Choice and Telefilm's marketing arm were all considered helpful in making U.S. contacts in both radio and television.

B. Inventory

Many interviewees felt that Canada has immense public sector resources which have not been sufficiently exploited to the benefit of the broadcasting system as a whole. Although the CBC has accepted a policy of cooperation with independent producers, the thrust of CBC Enterprises to market American-style programs was criticized for not realistically appraising the potential sales value of CBC's inventory. Local radio programming, which is often considered too crude for the network, has found ready buyers in the more eclectic European marketplace. Several interviewees felt that a lot of CBC's regular programming would sell well on educational markets, and to the private radio sector which is searching for spoken-word Canadian programming. In addition to financial benefits, the CBC and its products would become more accessible, both pragmatically and psychologically, to the Canadian public at large.

The NFB was viewed in a similar perspective. Creators recognized that the NFB's domestic distribution system has been completely inadequate in making NFB material available to the general public. But recent suggestions that the NFB be dismantled and its resources allocated to the private sector were universally deplored: the NFB has entered into many successful co-productions with independent producers, and is revitalizing Canada's documentary heritage with docudramas such as The Saga of Hal Banks.

Especially appreciated by creators was the NFB's recent thrust to provide more services outside central Canada. The NFB has addressed its distribution problems by exploring domestic television and video windows for its inventory and new products. In a recent collaboration with a prairie producer, the NFB did an extensive marketing study which yielded new possibilities for selling the film. Given the NFB's production expertise and its increased availability at the community level across Canada, creators urged that it take a greater role in programming for Canadian broadcasting.

C. Publicity

Insufficient expertise in promotion severely undermines the marketing of Canadian programs in both the public and private sectors:

> CTV is really an ad hoc network, so you don't get the sense that the network pulls together to support something. Half of the affiliates will pre-empt you or run you very casually at 7:00 instead of 7:30 and show a local horse-

> race. That's the biggest stumbling block to doing television in Canada: no one markets the damn shows. (11)

The way Canadian programming is presented on the private networks often suggests that the network does not believe in it: a recent program in the Global Playhouse series was ten minutes late starting and viewers were reminded several times during the film itself, not at commercial breaks, that Alfred Hitchcock Presents was coming up next. Several producers emphasized that the promotion department had to be involved in production as early as possible to get good results.

Some independent producers preferred not to use CBC promotion at all, and the situation highlights a major dilemma at the CBC. Many creators feel that the CBC promotion department promotes the CBC rather than its programs, reflecting the institution's paranoia with regard to public image and the possibility of further cutbacks. That ambivalence is reinforced when CBC promotion gets involved in an independent production, since a successful independent production by implication suggests that CBC in-house production may be inferior. On the other hand, such a show is often presented with no indication that it was in fact produced outside the corporation.

Few instances are as extreme as the following case history, but it illustrates the points made above. A film was independently produced with money from the Broadcast Fund; the CBC's license fee, covering 20% of the budget, bought two showings. At first the producer handled the promotion, but halfway through the CBC took over: the producer claimed that four magazine covers were lost as a result. Before the first run, a press screening was arranged:

> They asked me to put up the money for a press screening in the province where the film is set. I flew down from Toronto and the CBC had two vice-presidents there. They didn't even have the courtesy to come over and say hello. They told everybody, "This is a CBC production -- see how we look after the regions." My company's name wasn't even mentioned -- we picked up the tab for the screening, we shot the show and we produced it. But two vice-presidents can afford to fly out there and take the credit for it. (12)

The producer took responsibility for making 30-second and 60-second promos for the film. When he heard that the CBC had sold several commercial spots for $4,000 each, he felt they were short-selling Canadian programming: he then went out and sold more spots for $10,000 each.

In between the first and second run, the film won several national and international awards. The awards were not used in the promotion for the second run, which was barely promoted at all: the wrong time was given to TV Guide, and the showing was pre-empted in half the country for a special event. The producer's conclusion: "The CBC is rife with inefficiency. They are incompetent liars and cheats -- and their publicity stinks."

D. Commercials

Creators felt strongly that commercials were detrimental to programming, although they also recognized that viewers might not mind ads as much as they do. Apart from the intrusion of commercials into the natural flow of a program, several felt that they qualified the content of a program by juxtaposition:

> I find a lot of the commercials offensive -- I can't believe that they don't irritate other people too. I find them especially offensive when they're in sharp contrast to the content of the show ... We did a show which questioned our concepts of economic development, and the commercials that were in it appeared extremely bizarre and incongruous. (13)

But the need to sell commercials also has significant effects on the promotion of programming which the sales department considers does not have strong commercial appeal:

> With ads in your show, publicity priorities get related to commercial concerns. We've lost priority for on-air promotion for our series -- they can't afford to promo it because they're busy selling commercial spots for American programming. It'll get worse as they aim more for international sales, and the whole Canadian perspective on broadcasting will get blurred ... (14)

Professionals urged that, on the CBC at least, if commercials were considered necessary they should take into account the content and structure of the program they appeared in.

SEVEN: DISTRIBUTION

1. Bailey, 23
2. Wheeler, 26
3. NW
4. Gordon, 5
5. McBrearty, 21
6. Steele, 13
7. Guettel, 19
8. Fresco, 10
9. Gillard, 6
10. NW
11. NW
12. NW
13. NW
14. NW

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE CBC

In previous chapters, this report has dealt with program creation in the context of Canadian broadcasting as a whole. Those chapters included comments about the CBC insofar as they not only shed light on the corporation itself but had general application throughout the system. Chapter eight, however, is devoted exclusively to the CBC and its concerns.

As might be expected, the CBC prompted substantial comment. To the extent that the setup of the report encouraged criticism, negative views of the CBC were not unexpected. However, many professionals expressed a profound sense of betrayal in relation to the CBC: the passion of that emotion in itself indicated how deeply they feel committed to the idea of public broadcasting and its pivotal role in Canadian culture.

Also surprising was the relative lack of specific policy suggestions regarding such matters as a second network. Although the impression given was that all the interviewees would favour such a notion, their concerns focused much more on very fundamental issues: maintaining a vital contact with the audience, reconciling the demands of creativity with the structure of an institution, restoring positive attitudes and working conditions, improving labour and management relations. The vast majority seemed to know instinctively what they and the CBC should be doing: creating high-quality programs that reflect, through their individual visions, the culture of the Canadian people. Why the CBC found it so difficult to accomplish this goal both saddened and bewildered them.

I. THE INSTITUTION

Although the general mandate of the CBC seems so simple, the problem of defining it more precisely and acting upon those definitions has enveloped the corporation in what one performer called "a great unhappiness." And hanging over all its efforts is the constant pall of insufficient time and resources, sapping the will to perform the obvious:

> Instead of relying on spokesmen and experts, every time Morningside has a panel on food for the holidays it should have an Italian and a Ukrainian and a native person -- they should just be part of it, whatever it is. What we do is ghettoize everything. We haven't risen to the occasion of creatively exploiting our mandate -- we wear it as a cross. In a way, we can't afford to: to actually incorporate that into programming takes a lot of thought. Everybody here is overworked and everybody does what's easiest. (1)

One veteran producer with extensive management experience was pessimistic about the CBC's chances of survival in its present form. His view that the corporation must be "stripped down" distilled the dissatisfactions of many interviewees:

> There are far too many non-productive bureaucratic steps between the actual decision-making level and the execution level ... I realize that efficiency breeds unemployment -- but I also realize that the CBC cannot be considered an essential service. Why not democratically and fairly dissolve the present structure altogether and rebuild a new public broadcasting service that would be more in keeping with our changing times? We have got ourselves so bureaucratically and politically involved that

> we should just strip it all down. That's a horrendous job, but I don't see any other way of preserving what's good about the CBC -- and there's a lot good about it. (2)

A. Mandate

i) The idea of an institution

Several interviewees addressed the fundamental question of whether an institution of any kind was suitable for the purpose of creating programs for broadcasting. Much of the present conflict at the CBC over issues such as contracting out personnel and licensing independent production stems from an implicit assumption that, as an institution, the CBC is not fulfilling its mandate. Contracting out and licensing try to recompense for inadequacies in the institution, but they leave the fundamental problems unsolved.

If it is assumed that there is substantial benefit in a public broadcaster -- and nobody doubted that there was -- then the question becomes: What are the inherent qualities of an institution that will help the public broadcaster fulfill its mandate? Leaving aside the amply documented negative aspects such as complacency and hardened creative arteries for the moment, is the CBC taking full advantage of the benefits of being an institution?

Looked at from this perspective, certain issues such as contracting out acquire a different significance. One veteran producer pointed out how economies made through eliminating benefits also eliminate something intangible which defines the essence of the CBC as an institution:

> There doesn't seem to be any sense of continuity or history within the CBC. It appears to me that most of the personality has been drained from the image and the blame has to be shared by both sides of the bargaining table ... When you heard Andrew Allan, if the show had nothing else, it had personality. I find now, if you listen constantly to the morning show, you come away feeling depressed -- there's no personality ... Each time the CBC negotiated a collective agreement, they went for the contract producer versus the staff producer: that ends up with no personality on air ... if they'd hired producers the right way in the first place, you wouldn't have the problem. (3)

The inability of many contract producers to give the CBC a voice is not surprising, given their treatment by the CBC:

> We're all in a serial monogamous relationship with the corporation ... As a contract producer, there's a situation which happens over and over again in the annual negotiations, where any good feeling which might have been built up over the term from doing the job well is whittled away to the point where you feel like you're being done a favour by being kept there. No one comes to you first to say, "We'd like to negotiate your contract" -- you have to go to them and remind them. There's no civilized system for it -- there's never an interview that says "We really appreciate the kind of work that you've been doing." I've never heard of anyone coming out of those negotiations feeling good about themselves. You have to start building up your momentum again -- it's unnecessary and surely counter-productive. So much of what we do depends on our level of confidence and feeling positive about the job we're doing and why we're doing it. (4)

Many argued, on the other hand, that the uncertainty of an annual contract in fact stimulated creativity.

As a compromise, several suggested that all employees of the CBC from the president on down, should be on maximum three-year renewable contracts with full "permanent" staff benefits. The same time period would also provide a budget base for financial appropriations and an opportunity for a regular evaluation of the corporation's mandate.

People are an institution's richest resource; if they are not nurtured and exploited in human and productive ways, programming -- the raison d'etre of the corporation -- inevitably suffers. According to a veteran performer, nowhere is this more evident than in training young talent and channeling the expertise of mature employees for mutual benefit:

> The CBC's message today is, "All we care about is getting on the air." It goes back to the question of mandate -- should we create ongoing institutions? But now everything is ad hoc ... Am I a resource? Or just a person they deal with annually? ... They should ask themselves what is it that I can do for them? ... No department exists to evaluate me as a creative resource. The corporation's training attitude in the last ten to fifteen years has been, "We'll turn over stones, find people, allow the sunlight to pour on them but after that they can go somewhere else -- you're on your own, buddy." Who is selecting the people to be trained? It's all part of the same management vogue, i.e. if you can manage a peanut-butter factory, you can run a broadcasting company. I don't think so. (5)

ii) A leadership role

Even though creators at the CBC instinctively felt they knew what to do, articulating the corporation's purpose in terms of "unity and identity" highlighted the conflicting demands of centralization vs. regionalism which are so much a part of the debate about the Canadian identity as a whole. One performer suggested looking at Canada -- and hence at the CBC -- through the eyes of outsiders; rather than standing south of the border, she suggested the Third World:

> Canada is the number one democracy that isn't American or stuck like the other Western allies in the American camp. If you consider it as a colony, a developing country, Canada is the leader of the Third World -- it has moral leadership and economic leadership. If you go down to the Caribbean, you instantly hear about Canada. They have a strong image of Canada as being very different from the United States -- talking to the Cubans, being nice to Nicaragua, not being freaked out by a left-wing government. Canada seems to them to be behaving in a sensible, generous way. (6)

A leadership role is especially appropriate to Canada and its public broadcaster in the field of communications, where Canada's technology and communications theorists stand pre-eminent. With leadership comes responsibility and the need to educate in the largest sense; without over-stepping provincial jurisdictions by recommending that the CBC should be an educational network, the same performer suggests that the corporation has a basic responsibility to tell Canadians how their country and the world works:

> If one channel were challenging in the realm of ideas, that would influence things immensely just because it would legitimize -- in pop culture terms, in a pop medium -- that talking about things like civics is important: it's not four-eyes stuff to know about how the government works, it's not out of anyone's reach. Those are our tools -- this is a

> democracy -- it's very important for us, otherwise we can't make the right choices about politicians ... Advocacy programs could be acceptable on a station where the public mandated it to debate major political, cultural, legal, social issues of the times. You assume it can be made "honourable" by accountability -- it would be no more a propaganda tool than it is right now for those who want to speak to consumers. (7)

B. Diversity

"None of us can find our audience," was a typical lament from creators about the broadcasting system and the CBC in particular. With isolated exceptions, creators stressed that more distribution, more production and more access was urgently needed to put the CBC back in touch with the nation's diverse creativity.

i) Centralization

Many felt that the CBC was obsessed with imitating the American networks. Dominated by the concentration of Hollywood-model film production in central Canada, the corporation cannot step outside itself to ask basic questions such as how radio and television can truly reflect the Canadian people. Balanced against one producer's request that the CBC "bring in the energy off the streets" was the corporation's rejection of Newfoundland's Wonderful Grand Band: "You're too popular and too saucy -- we don't want you back." Cutbacks in programming originating at the local/community and regional level were harshly criticized by the majority of interviewees:

> Even in radio the regions lost some of their time because Margaret Lyons doesn't want regional radio. It's more than obvious in the cutbacks -- there went everything that had anything to do with us. And other than that, the station here lost a janitor and a costume mistress: they finally cut the last bit of lean off the fatted calf. (8)

Many felt that the increased centralization of power in Ottawa, and the resulting psychological alienation of senior management from any production sector, was crippling the CBC's mandate. The establishment of a special vice-president for regional programming was seen as a ghettoizing administrative gesture which will have exactly the opposite effect than intended -- and only legitimize the disenfranchisement of regional producers. This lack of trust in middle management, and their resultant lack of authority, has left them largely uninterested in exploiting the diverse talent around them.

But the talent itself sometimes cannot recognize its own worth: the tendency among Canadians to measure quality -- and indeed reality -- by standards from elsewhere permeates the culture. One performer told the story of a black Toronto singer who was criticized by the black community for funking up his reggae music and making it more white. He then realized that everything which entered his ears in Toronto was his culture because he lived there and expressed it. Once those kinds of psychological barriers come down, program creators and the CBC can embrace their own visions and the environment that produces them. A minimum of 60% local talent on the CBC was suggested, as well as constant research and development into new ways to make programs:

> The CBC should be experimenting all the time. They should have guest artists in to work on things like translations, adaptations to television, new show ideas. There could be layers and layers of ways to fertilize and keep air going through it from the civilian world. The in-house people could be training in a research and development department to develop new ideas, new techniques. Let anybody with five credentials walk in and try something for $2,000 or x amount of time in the editing room. (9)

C. Production

i) Past glory

Many interviewees nostalgically recalled the golden days of CBC radio and television and despaired that they could never be reproduced. To the veterans, however, it was clear that those achievements were not haphazard but a direct result of the CBC's institutional nature:

> The permanent staff at the CBC have developed so many techniques, they have advanced our industry so much: there's no other institution in North America that has contributed half as much. We have produced techniques in scenic design like the glass shot where you don't have to build the whole set; camera techniques developed by our people have been used world-wide. We developed techniques for the whole industry because people had jobs and had time to experiment. If a guy is out there shooting a half-hour film on his own he hasn't got time to do that. (10)

The CBC's inability to generate that kind of creativity again is not just the result of economic restraint. Negative attitudes are just as debilitating:

> There's lots of exceptional talent in this country. There are people lined up at our

> doors every day begging to come in and some of them are brilliant. Management says, "Sorry, we have no vacancies," and people lose interest ... I've seen keen young people come in and start working and say, "I'm going to be a great multi-track engineer." Well, they have no hope of sitting inside one of our multi-track studios for eons, the way the system works. By the time there's the slightest opportunity, they've died inside: we have the greatest knack for killing ambition. The only people who have got ahead are those who have just said, "I don't care, I'm not listening to what anybody tells me that's negative. I'm just going to do it." There aren't too many of them. (11)

ii) Conflicting objectives

As the bureaucracy surrounding the film-production model grew in the 1970s, middle management became an autonomous group between production and senior management with its own objectives:

> There's a real lack of focus on the reason that the CBC exists, and that is to make programs. Producers spend a lot of time just trying to make the system work so that they can produce programs and I always end up feeling that I was doing it for myself. When I'm asking for the facilities that I know are necessary, I feel like I'm asking for a new dress. We're supposed to have the same purpose in life, but we seem to be at odds with management objectives -- they seem to be very different from producers' objectives. (12)

Rather than representing the interests of program creators, middle management has increasingly been reduced to the role of hatchet men:

> It used to be that, as head of a department, you fought for your department -- you fought all the way down the hall to Bay Street and you said, "What do you mean we need less

> money -- we need a better host, we need to send people to Hollywood," or whatever it is and that was the role of the department head. Now the role of the department head is to be a screw to go to the corporation heads and come back and tell us what we have to do on their behalf, rather than fighting them on our behalf. He gets the word from them and tells us where we have to cut. That's very disconcerting. We have no leadership at the lower management level in this corporation any more. (13)

Once management's objectives no longer concern the product per se, it cannot remain neutral with regard to the product. In order to justify its own power, the product becomes secondary, subordinate and inferior:

> I find it ironic that three-quarters of the staff seem to spend most of their time protecting their own positions and never the product. Could it be that they are ashamed of the product? Or is it because they do not understand what the product is or should be? (14)

iii) Undermining the product

Once management withdraws support from the product, it sees no reason to perform one of its main functions within the institution: maintenance of professional standards and quality control among program creators. For years, the CBC's producer and director association has been attempting to have proper evaluation procedures instituted, as well as programs for upgrading professional standards. The results of management's reluctance to do so are visible everywhere:

> When a full-time person is not qualified to properly produce, then several very destructive processes enter into the mix. First, the producer is usually aware of his shortcomings and compensates for them in a way that ensures

> that attention will not be drawn to them. This often means forbidding input from others (like the engineer). This destroys the possibility for any creative synergism. A good producer doesn't care how a product gets good. Sometimes, one doesn't have to do anything more than assemble the right talent together, wind them up, and let them go. Music recording is an area where boundaries cross completely. An engineer may suddenly have a great production or musical idea, and an artist or producer may have an engineering idea. Qualified producers have the confidence and intelligence to welcome creative input and not be intimidated by it.
>
> The unions make the situation worse by drawing rigid boundary lines where none should exist. There are many situations where the recording engineer could and should also produce. Sometimes, the reverse is true. Nothing can beat the pleasure of a truly competent and professional team coming up with a really good product. It happens far too infrequently. (15)

The deterioration of in-house production reinforces management's economic initiatives to contract out. The problem is quickly seen, not as a rectifiable malfunction, but as something inherent in the institution itself. But contracting out will eventually erode the whole institution, rather than raising quality standards:

> The cutbacks have done a lot to destroy the feeling of belonging to a big family. None of us trust the CBC any longer. All the managers are trying to get people to opt out or take them on contract or half-time so they don't have to pay benefits. But a lot of people are going to leave -- they can't afford to sit around and wait for work to happen, they have to go and look for it. When CBC wants them for a show, they're not going to be there ... and when they are available, they'll charge very high fees. Already that's happening -- independent producers make

> plans and tie them up, then the show falls through and they have no work. They don't trust anybody any more. (16)

The same erosion takes place at the macro-level of licensing independent production: as the CBC licenses independents to reduce its own costs, in-house morale drops and talented professionals question why they should labour under adverse conditions for poor pay, compared to the paradise of private enterprise fed by inflated Broadcast Fund budgets. Several creators pointed out that the occasional licensed production may keep in-house creators "on their toes," but that ultimately the trend towards licensing independent production will lead to the demise of all in-house production except for news and sports. Even that may not solve the problem: working on location with an ENG team can be exciting and rewarding, but information programming in the studio is so deadening to technicians that a significant retooling of the information production process will have to take place to avoid further labour problems.

D. Image

Several participants felt that the CBC's attempts at selling its own image as an institution were misguided: they believe that the real image problem arises out of the public's alienation from the corporation at large. They express strong support for the idea of public broadcasting, and many of the CBC's programs. But they are uncertain about the institution itself -- a feeling that is clearly reflected in the government's willingness to cut back the CBC without fear of a strong outcry from the public at large.

Instead of promoting itself as a glossy imitation of an American network -- an approach that may boost ratings but does not reduce the public's feelings of alienation -- several technicians suggested that the CBC must make contact with, and become comfortable in, the local community: when filming or recording on location, for example, more effort should go into informing and educating the public through sandwich boards beside mobile units, etc. By focusing promotion on high-profile, one-off features such as Charlie Grant's War and other programs likely to draw ad revenue, the CBC lowers the profile of programming which audiences can relate to on a more immediate local and regional level.

The trend towards "packaging" product to fit an image which the CBC wishes to "sell" to its audience results in conflicting rationales at the program level: one performer related how a proposal for a satirical number on The Journal was rejected on the grounds that the piece -- whose merit was acknowledged by all concerned -- could not be tailored to the "look" one producer felt The Journal should have.

The CBC has also not succeeded in defending itself against charges of overmanning and excessive downtime; technicians feel this only reflects management's willingness to accept the received wisdom that the corporation is helpless in the face of supposed union blackmail. The CBC should explain why what appears to be overmanning on location may be the result of bilingual coverage, or duplicated coverage by The Journal. Once the CBC begins to explain overmanning, it might find that, in cases where overmanning was not justified, not only union featherbedding but management planning was also to blame.

Similarly, the corporation does not directly challenge superficial criticism of deadwood and laxity. Where the charges have specific merit, they should be addressed as individual cases; otherwise, the corporation should explain fully the positive benefits that come from having a public broadcasting institution -- for example, that creative people need time to think, and cannot be "productive" in the most industrial sense all the time.

While the CBC may appear to foster the image of a glamorous network, it does not promote the genuine efforts of its production staff. One veteran production employee was shocked at how ignorant management was of personnel and production needs in this regard:

> Several years ago, a directive came from upper management that art and design credits would be removed from shows running under an hour to save time. As a professional, one of your biggest assets is the credit, and it's almost as important inside the CBC as outside. Mostly women worked in design at that time, and a couple of us went to see the manager. I'd never been for women's lib but I was after that: he refused to do anything and his final remark was, "Well, we all like to see our name in lights." He was a businessman who knew nothing about programming -- the policy had been made, and nothing could be changed. His attitude really threw me. (17)

One constituency which the CBC has rapidly alienated in recent years is the independent film industry. Many independent producers recognize that they are threatening to the CBC, and interpret the CBC's withdrawal from the Broadcast Fund in 1984 as a measure of how far the corporation can be trusted to act in their best interests. Not only are the CBC's license fees "Third World," the corporation has reneged on agreed payments and delayed others to the point where the independents have incurred severe financial hardship and lost all confidence in the working relationship. However, certain departments such as Arts, Music and Science were singled out for praise, and both Denis Harvey and John Kennedy were viewed as the kind of informed decision-makers the CBC has lacked in the recent past.

II. HUMAN RELATIONS

A. Attitude

Repeatedly CBC program creators focused on questions of attitude as major obstacles to doing the job properly. Negative feelings about themselves, about their superiors and about the corporation as a whole rippled through virtually all comments about the CBC, even when it was being most ardently defended.

i) Respect

The amount of respect accorded program creators by management diminishes in relation to their position on an implicit hierarchy: producer, writer, director, performer, designer, technician. "The CBC just thinks of directors as traffic cops," was one director's comment, and similar feelings were expressed about all job categories. Because few people feel they are respected as individuals for the particular work they do, they sink into a "Why should I work?" attitude often condemned by the sentiment that "Employees think the CBC owes them a living."

Lack of respect means lack of trust and an inability to grant individuals the authority to make decisions, even if they have demonstrated their competence:

> If you both agree a program was terrifically successful, there should be some continuity so that on the next program you're not starting from square one in terms of building up that trust again. You shouldn't feel you have to scream and yell about getting the people you need because you've already proven that you know how to do it. (18)

ii) Alienation

Professionals stressed over and over how disastrous it is for a cultural institution to be ruled from Ottawa, a city divorced from the nation's true cultural capitals. That decapitation of the CBC reverberates throughout the corporation, as each level feels alienated from those above and below it. The feeling crystallizes in repeated complaints about the slow elevators in Montreal headquarters haplessly trying to bridge the communication gap between the production crews in the basement and the bureaucracy in its ivory tower. Also targeted were the ugly renovations to the Radio building in Toronto which were carried out just as the corporation was pleading poor and firing employees.

Those signs of the institution's insensitivity to the feelings of its personnel -- and its unwillingness to solicit their input in even token ways -- are deeply resented, especially by technicians. More than most creators, they must live in the CBC's buildings, which in Toronto are universally acknowledged as inadequate. However, as many technicians pointed out, inexpensive investment in basic amenities like lockers and parking vouchers for night staff workers can deliver large dividends in employee satisfaction and productivity.

Perhaps worst of all is the CBC's alienation from its immediate constituency -- the people in the community where a production centre, no matter how large or small, is located. In extreme cases, people see the CBC as a despoiler, not an enricher of their cultural birthright:

> It's CODCO's tenth anniversary and we're doing bits from the past. We used to have three

> American army uniforms: it took us a long time to get them in from New York, they're expensive. When we were finished with them, we sold them to the CBC here when they had a costume department so that people would still have access to them. They got rid of the costume mistress up there, so I called up whoever the middle management person is in charge of all that now. He said, "No, we don't have a costume department, so I can't give them to you." I said, "Look, I got those costumes from New York, you've got to give them to me." He said, "No." I said, "I'll pay you for them." He said, "We don't run a rental organization." So now they're sitting on the costumes that *we* put in there. I want them back -- we're going to have to do an Entebbe-type raid to get them. (19)

iii) Teamwork

Negative attitudes make teamwork almost impossible. Creators in the regions are convinced that network management hopes they will fail, and that conditions are imposed to make failure inevitable. The fragmentation of each section in the CBC is typified by a technician's comment that he pays no attention to peer feedback because he's sure it would all be motivated by jealousy or defensiveness. At the production level, there were many complaints that each sector -- design, lighting, sound -- went ahead with their own priorities, ignoring the needs of others.

It is the role of producers, and their superiors in management, to encourage workers to overcome balkanization and work together. Their job is made more difficult by the fact that the technicians, their supposed subordinates in the chain of command, frequently know more than they do:

> It's generally the people who are not in a position to do anything, the people with less power, who end up not only knowing, but very often having to hold the hands of the people who don't know, and make them look very good and talented. In the end, it's frustrating, extremely frustrating. (20)

And when a union president was asked whether some technicians might not be doing their job, he replied:

> We do have some incompetent technicians -- but I'm not going to sacrifice them if management won't sacrifice their incompetent people either. (21)

B. Management

i) Knowledge

Management unfamiliarity with the production process was frequently cited as a major reason for misunderstanding between middle management and program creators. This problem is recognized at the BBC, where the head of radio drama must spend at least thirteen weeks a year producing programs. So few at CBC management have worked in production that when efforts are made with the best intentions to collaborate on improving communication, management ignorance can sabotage the initiative. One technician had served on a union-management job evaluation and description committee:

> We watched a combined job operation where a fellow was doing switching and rolling his own video tapes and films by remote control. He was operating the station break too, not like in Toronto where somebody else does that. There were two of them, and they were doing so many of these different jobs, and they did them faultlessly. The reaction of most of the

> management people was, "Well, I guess that wasn't too difficult, was it." To those of us who knew what was involved, all of these changes and cues and advance rolls that they had to do, we thought it was a real tour de force. (22)

Technicians pointed out that there are no job evaluation procedures for management, and hence they have no criteria for measuring their performance. Instead of keying performance to program objectives, they fall back on traditional management virtues such as accounting efficiency which may be irrelevant and even detrimental to production. While lauding the recent initiative to generate more drama, creators were concerned that management had no sense of how long it would take to develop expertise, and that they would set unrealistic deadlines for achieving corporate goals.

ii) Authority

Creators praised individuals in middle management whom they felt fought the inertia of the bureaucracy. But for the most part managers were seen as victims, the "messenger boys" of a misconceived, outdated system of administration. As one technician pointed out, the unions stood up for their own, whereas middle managers were easy scapegoats for bad policy decisions. Without proper authority of their own, managers yielded readily to "political" demands: their inability to prevent "old-boy networks" from meddling in program production, especially casting, was frequently criticized.

The most damaging corollary of absentee authority is constant delay in making decisions:

> One of the corporation's biggest wastages of money is that they don't solve problems. The unions went to arbitration recently on a number of issues and won every issue but one. The corporation has not put into place any of those arbitration wins by the union: they're appealing back to the same arbitrator. It's a long waste of time and a huge waste of money. Arbitration costs a minimum of $1200 a day. Count the number of managers there, and the number of union people there: all those wages have to be paid, all that loss of productivity has to be absorbed. (23)

This tendency not to solve problems on the spot has a long history. However, its frequency has increased since the recent centralization -- and many creators are convinced that it is now corporation policy to delay dealing with grievances in order to provoke the unions into striking, or driving individuals to resign:

> With the stall on in one instance, four out of the fourteen employees that were affected have resigned. In another instance, seven people were involved and two of them have come to the realization that they don't want to go back to their old jobs, partly in anger over the CBC's treatment of them. If they did a cost comparison ratio of what they were saving compared to what they were losing, I have no doubt that in real dollars -- they'd see that it's costing them more. (24)

One union president claimed that management had been told not to approach the unions first about contracting out on the grounds that management should have the right to do so at any time -- and so the onus would be on the unions to prove otherwise. There were many suggestions for reducing management positions, as well as acknowledgement that they were underpaid for the kinds of jobs they should be doing. The suggestion that, in the event of a strike, management should also receive strike pay since the current disputes were of management origin, was very popular.

C. Unions

CBC unions feel that management is inconsistent, unsure of its mandate and lacking in authority to make decisions except by the book. The unions respond by becoming rigid and sticklers for detail in defending against what they consider to be an arbitrary use of power; one technician acknowledged that the collective agreements were overloaded with picayune clauses, but he claimed that each was included to counter a particular abuse.

Members who acknowledged this fact also criticized their union leaders for not doing more to address the big picture instead of over-reacting in knee-jerk fashion to small details:

> NABET continues to offer a steady stream of propaganda to the membership that paints every management move as a malicious and deliberate attack on the union. The union claims that management really wants to eliminate the union. I think not. If they really wanted to, they would have done it by now, and there's nothing the union could do to stop it. (25)

Union regulations often reflected outmoded attitudes towards technologies:

> There was a possibility of using a CBC studio for a film I did recently. I brought a BBC director in, and the technical producer said, "We need one hour in the morning for camera lineup." Camera lineup today is totally electronic and takes four seconds, but because

> fifteen years ago it did take an hour, the unions kept it on. So we spent an hour watching this happen. The director said he'd never seen such total incompetence and wasted time anywhere in the world. (26)

Several technicians thought that unions were inefficient ways of addressing the corporation's labour problems. Leaders at NABET, a largely volunteer-run grass-roots union, were no longer interested in their production jobs but had become would-be managers, reflecting middle management's bad handling of human relations:

> The unions traditionally blackmailed management with "We're going to hit the bricks just before the Pope comes or just before the Olympics unless we get all of our demands met." Well, their karmas finally caught up with them and they can't pull that crap any more. Instead of pulling tactics like that, if they had spent some money trying to make their membership well trained and really the best that they could possibly be, if they graded their own people, then when you said "I'm a NABET class 8," that could mean something special. If we were all so good that management couldn't possibly dream of going to air without us because there was nobody else who could possibly come up to that level of competence, then all our jobs would be safe and secure and there'd be no adversarial position and everything would be wonderful. (27)

A common criticism of all the unions was their insistence on maintaining discrete and conflicting jurisdictions. Generalists chafed that both unions and management discouraged multi-talented individuals:

> Basically I say wind me up and turn me loose and I'll do stuff -- the more I can do the happier they are. I just want to get paid for all of that stuff: at the moment, the structure

> is such that I have to give some of it away.
> I'm a bit old for that. (28)

Program creators frequently felt that the best technicians were those who ignored union restrictions, and many union members indicated they would rather take less pay and keep working at jobs they loved than go on strike.

D. Training and Development

i) Procedures

The CBC's lack of training and career development procedures was alluded to in such detail that it represents an anti-model of how a cultural institution should regenerate itself and maintain creativity. The CBC's straitened circumstances, and its primary goal of "getting on the air at all costs," have given training a bottom priority. Many professionals said this was self-defeating in the long-term: unless training and development were given a top priority there would be no institution left to preserve.

The corporation appears to have no consistent guidelines for inducting human resources, training them, instilling commitment to its goals and promoting talent up through management so that principles and expertise can be passed on to others. Senior management is often recruited from outside the corporation, instead of being promoted up from the production level. There are no adequate evaluation procedures at any level of the corporation, nor is there enough informal criticism or praise.

Furthermore, the corporation has become so sensitive to charges that it does not exercise proper quality control that it has yielded part of its responsibility in that area to contract consultants who often have private agenda which may compromise objective judgement. One technician objected to outside contractors evaluating employees for available positions and promotions on the grounds that the corporation should trust itself and its internal procedures sufficiently to do the job itself.

The discontinuity often noted in the CBC results in outright ignorance and denigration of talent: creators felt that only the CBC could approach the country's most popular musical dramatist and offer him $400 for the radio rights to a musical; only CBC production assistants would be left so unaware of who people are that they would call up a host with 20 years' high-profile exposure on radio and television to ask if he had ever done an interview, or ask one of the corporation's most successful screenwriters whether he had ever written for the CBC.

With no department or mandate to evaluate employees and gauge their potential benefit to the corporation, the CBC does not implement basic development procedures such as sabbaticals for long-term employees, or proper retraining for new technologies. Many creators criticized the system whereby the CBC is responsible for training technicians: because it frequently fails to do so, the unions must decide whether to take up the slack at their own cost. The more militant, such as

NABET, often refuse on principle, leaving the job up to their own locals -- if it is done at all.

ii) Making do

Apart from the CBC's long-standing passivity -- reinforced by cutbacks -- in the area of training, the emphasis on information and sports programming, as well as the shift from studios to location, has exacerbated training problems for creators of performance programming.

The topicality of information and sports programming makes planning for training and development very difficult; one veteran technician noted that, before the upsurge of sports coverage, summer was a relatively less intense work period and allowed for more training. But the newer, more flexible technology encourages on-the-job training: once an ENG crew member knows the equipment, training virtually ends. The same attitudes when applied to performance programming can be disastrous: not only are bad habits allowed to take root in the absence of any quality controls, but the overall philosophy of information production increasingly disregards the need for preparation. Event-driven programming, while of substantial value in itself, does not necessarily make a good model for other kinds of programming. For producers of long-running performance series, the only solution has been to train and retrain within the boundaries of their autonomous units.

III. IMPROVEMENTS

Restoring faith and trust at all levels of the CBC was the most wished-for change among program creators. Overwhelmingly they feel that if authority were placed in the hands of those individuals who by virtue of their position merit trust -- starting from the most basic levels of production at the local and regional level and working on up -- then they could help the corporation fulfill its mandate:

> The CBC needs benevolent neglect. It needs to not have those strong people at the top making all those decisions. What it needs is people in the regions, people working on stuff, people being allowed to do exciting things without it being so that any time anybody moves, the eyes of the corporation are on them and every move is an important move. Things can't flourish like that. Things have got to be allowed to grow underground, and get good. You can't groom and hype The Frantics for two years. You've got to just put them on TV and take a chance. (29)

A. Technology

Although program creators are aware that the CBC has commissioned studies on the impact of technology, they do not see much evidence of an enlightened attitude in their daily work. New equipment is introduced and then lies unused because older equipment complementing it is broken down, or because employees are not adequately retrained to use it. Also, the corporation makes few provisions for utilizing new technology creatively: one independent producer presented management with a design system for video technology that folded into a suitcase and had been used on an internationally acclaimed production, but he was told that the corporation wasn't interested.

Interviewees urged the CBC to look beneath the surface of technological change at the implications for infrastructure. Tape's heavier demands on new facilities will make scheduling even more complex; that problem, in turn, should be looked at in light of the relative attitudes of NABET and CUPE towards jurisdiction and retraining of film personnel. Tape use will open up more jobs for generalists: ENG crew members will have both camera and editing expertise, in contrast to more specialized film-trained personnel, many of whom, especially veterans, may not be marketable as a result. Creators felt that such issues were rarely addressed directly in collective bargaining, but instead got lost in the generalized rhetoric of mutual hostility between unions and management.

i) Scheduling

While there was general agreement that the CBC's facilities were inadequate, especially in Toronto, a fundamental rearrangement of scheduling to give programming priority was considered necessary:

> In some areas, the focus seems to be to make the shift system work. With the VTR operators, for example, some people work day shift, some work night shift, and they don't want to upset that system. If you ask for someone you know is good for the kind of thing that you're doing, they don't want to give that person to you because it upsets the system ... These are serious limitations and they're even more

> serious because of the recent cuts. Some of the people let go were very good people, so you're left with fewer and fewer options. (30)

At the moment, the availability of radio studios in Toronto -- and telephone access to them -- is very limited as the result of the massive shift towards strip programming on CBC Radio. On the other hand, television facilities in Vancouver sometimes are not used because of cutbacks in regional programming. The on-again, off-again use of human resources is also detrimental: bad planning often leaves producers doing nothing for months at a time, while management's policy in response to the cutbacks of not hiring temporary workers has placed onerous overtime demands on many technicians.

Periodic attempts are made to utilize facilities across the country by transferring production from one centre to another. But program creators wanted more flexibility at the local level to give the community in the immediate vicinity direct access to a facility. Suggestions included more night bookings, adjusting the schedules and rotations of technicians so that they could be more easily assigned to a particular project, and more advance notice from management on how many new shows would be needed in a series.

Information and sports programming keyed to unforeseen events also places enormous strains on scheduling. In order to accommodate this programming, and to incorporate some of the suggestions for improved scheduling on performance programming, radically new collective agreements are required. But creators stressed that the demand for greater flexibility could not be handed down as a fiat from management, as if the problem were entirely the unions' fault. All union members would have to be convinced that what might appear to be arbitrary control over working conditions would in fact make their jobs easier and more satisfying because they could get more involved in individual projects and develop a commitment to them. If guarantees against exploitation were accorded -- not through the traditional means of strict job classifications and daily scheduling -- but in a framework that placed a priority on creative, satisfying teamwork for all concerned, the CBC's labour-management relations and its overburdened facilities might both be eased. Technicians appeared willing to accept new agreements on these terms, as long as existing contracts were honoured and adapted to the new system.

B. Communications

Several interviewees made comments to the effect that workers in the communications media are always the worst communicators. The lack of in-house communication at the CBC is notorious, leading to the so-called "urinal factor" -- more information is passed on inside the washrooms than outside them.

Creators had many suggestions for unblocking communications channels. While most ignored management's favoured mode of communication, the inter-office memo, several found that the system could be effectively silenced by answering in kind. But achieving communication breakdown rather than negative communication is a Pyrrhic victory. Several professionals pointed out that employees often didn't know what programs others were making, and that generating appreciation was a prerequisite to any further communication. Actively publicizing the broadcast of work by department employees, at all levels including technical staff, would eventually lead to fruitful post-mortems.

At the moment, control of in-house communication rests with Ottawa headquarters, ironically the most alienated centre in the system. Technicians point out that feedback surveys generated by Ottawa are not keyed to the realities of production, but address issues as if they arose out of an office environment. Similarly, in bargaining with the unions, management works from an industrial relations position that does not incorporate valuable information about program production which might be provided by the CBC's producers and directors. Most important, the Human Resources department, which was expressly established as a first recourse for an employee with a problem, is universally perceived to be a stooge of management, especially in the area of sexual harassment, leaving no institutional mediator of any legitimacy between management and production.

i) Budgets

No area is more plagued by breakdowns in communications than budgets. The CBC's budgets and accounting procedures at every level are inaccessible, as if to ward off critics who want to reduce its mandate or privatize it in the name of efficiency.

For program creators, lack of access to budget figures indicating the real cost of department overheads and contracting out leaves them powerless to defend legitimate financial requests to management and severely undermines both self-confidence and authority. Union members are not given financial responsibility, even in areas where gross inefficiencies result from purchasing requests having to be approved by management. Simple matters such as booking ahead to get reduced travel rates are now impossible thanks to the centralized accounting system whose delays, as one producer put it, have turned production at the CBC into "elective surgery."

EIGHT: THE CBC

1. NW
2. Diehl, 21
3. Diehl, 16
4. NW
5. NW
6. Taylor, 7
7. Taylor, 9
8. NW
9. Taylor, 10
10. Carter, 13
11. NW
12. Chilco, 13
13. NW
14. Diehl, 2
15. NW
16. Mess, 16
17. NW
18. NW
19. Walsh, 16
20. NW
21. NW
22. Manson, 19
23. Carter, 9
24. NW
25. NW
26. NW
27. NW
28. NW

29. Walsh, 22

30. NW

CHAPTER NINE: THE LONG TERM

This chapter will summarize the main concerns expressed by program creators in the form of suggestions for future policy. Although the structure of the report overall has been patterned on the chronology of the production process, this chapter will translate the issues raised into a model of the broadcasting system which highlights its institutional components. To do so, some extrapolation from the creators' comments has been necessary: since their main concern was making programs in an immediate context, not all of them addressed the question of what infrastructural changes could be implemented that might improve their particular situation. However, I believe there would be little disagreement among them with the principles underlying the following recommendations, whatever the differences in matters of detail.

Because the report was restricted to anglophone Canada, and to programming areas which did not come under provincial jurisdiction, the topics dealt with must be considered with those limitations in mind. However, the conclusions could readily be applied to both English and French Canada, and the few references to provincial participation take into account both the present and possible future contexts.

I. IDEALS AND PRINCIPLES

In theory, program creators and the Canadian broadcasting system both embrace one basic principle: self-expression. Those creators who believe in an idea will do their utmost to realize it in the best way possible and expect the broadcasting system to behave in a similar fashion. If the system's stated purpose is to give free expression to the diversity of the Canadian people in an enlightening and entertaining way, creators would like to become partners in that process.

Despite the significant number of criticisms presented in this report, program creators recognize that there are valuable and relatively numerous opportunities to realize their ideas in the broadcasting system. However, they are deeply troubled by the inability of major institutions such as the CBC and the CRTC to live up to their legislated potential. A common feeling seems to be that if only those bodies did what they were supposed to do, the mutual goals of the creators and the system could be achieved.

Ultimately, the gap between ideal and reality exists because political will cannot bridge the two. Perhaps the fault is lack of knowledge -- new ways and means may solve the problem. Or the present situation reflects a genuine ambivalence on the part of the Canadian people, an uncertainty which, in the cultural area at least, results in hesitation and often paralysis.

The Canadian penchant for compromise is in fact well documented and celebrated. Often it arises from a fear that by promoting one argument strongly, another aspect is negated: in broadcasting, for example, too strong an emphasis on Canadian self-expression may encroach upon an acknowledged taste for American mass culture. But program creators repeatedly stress that they, as artists, would be the last to deny anyone their freedom of choice. At the same time, they point out that choice is only meaningful when there are genuine options to choose from. And they are unanimous in their belief that they could provide more genuine choices, more programs which Canadians have indicated they truly enjoy, if the broadcasting system utilized its resources more efficiently for that purpose.

Creators feel that these broad principles must provide the basis for a new Broadcasting Act. For such legislation to be effective, it must be detailed and forceful so that broadcasting employees have a sense of purpose, and can match their achievement against uniform objectives. A government which can embrace and legislate those goals, confident that it has the support of the people, will communicate its confidence to these bodies. They in turn will have the responsibility for passing on those ideals to their employees whose hearts and minds cannot be truly engaged without a sense of contributing to the common goal of cultural expression.

Furthermore, forceful legislation must be properly enforced to have any effect: the CRTC must insure that the terms of the Act are followed. The legislation must be reasonable -- and it must have teeth. The decisions of the CRTC over the past 15 years have had a demoralizing effect on all creators committed to a broadcasting system whose purpose is to serve the Canadian people.

Time and again, the professionals interviewed in this report deplored the absence of strong individuals in the broadcasting system who were not afraid to make decisions on their own and, above all, who were willing to make compromises only to serve the common good. When the senior members of institutions such as the CBC and the CRTC set poor examples in this regard, it is not surprising that subordinates reflect their frailties. The following suggestions focus on changes in the system which would give individuals the authority to act in accordance with the stated ideals of the broadcasting system.

II. THE CRTC

In the opinion of program creators, the record of the CRTC is a series of unmitigated disasters: the liturgical repetition of Fowler's dictum on programming and housekeeping only underscores how tragically the commission has betrayed its mandate in this regard. The sole exception has been the 30 per cent Canadian content regulation on music, but it is difficult to assess to what extent the growth of the music industry in the 1970s is attributable to content legislation and how much is due to other factors. Professionals feel that the CRTC has constantly yielded to political influence and lobbying from the private sector: the commission's passivity in the face of ownership concentration and broken promises of performance has thoroughly undermined its credibility as a regulatory body.

A. The Mandate

The decisions of the CRTC have attempted to balance two goals: cultural development and financial viability. But by fully implementing its cultural mandate, the CRTC fears the private sector might suffer undue financial hardship, possibly to the point where licensees might have to give up their licenses.

Program creators do not ignore the financial difficulties involved in broadcast undertakings -- nor do they ignore the substantial profits to be made in this area. They believe that the Canadian broadcasting system must serve cultural goals first -- while at the same time making every effort to help the private sector achieve the same goals with reasonable profits.

Many questioned the efficacy of the CRTC's content and format regulations, and several suggested that they be dropped entirely in favour of an approach based on stimulating production through incentives and quotas. If the CRTC adopted this basic principle, its task would be greatly simplified -- and its image might be transformed from hand-slapping truant officer to benevolent guardian.

B. The Institution

Because the CRTC was established to implement cultural goals, appointments to the commission have been made on the basis that any Canadian can pass judgement on areas of concern to Canadian culture. Different criteria obtain at the Canada Council, for example, where juries determining grants are drawn from experts in the relevant art.

The CRTC's system of appointment was intended to eliminate the danger of partisan experts exercising control over an industry to which they might eventually return. Also there was an expectation that non-industry personnel might prove to be better defenders of cultural goals -- an assumption which in itself reveals an implicit mistrust of the industry and its ideals. In practice, appointments to the CRTC have been open to political patronage, and the lack of expertise on a commission regulating a particularly complex industry has been disastrous. If any appointment to the CRTC is to be non-partisan -- a debatable point -- it should be the chairman: other members should be drawn from all sectors of the industry.

Staffing of the CRTC should follow the same principle. If, as many creators suggest, CRTC regulations became simplified, staff could be reduced. Again, expertise in the industry -- and all ancillary cultural endeavours such as film, music and publishing -- should be manifest on the commission, in either a staffing or consulting capacity. In order to truly fulfill its mandate, the CRTC needs to season its hefty portion of lawyers with a strong dose of program creators and veteran administrators.

C. Canadian Content vs. Import Quotas

The logic behind content regulations is peculiarly Canadian: it assumes that top priority in broadcasting goes to foreign, i.e. American programming, and that Canadian production must forcibly replace that production. As a description of reality in 1970, that view is not far off the mark; as a prescription for changing that reality, it is of dubious value.

First of all, Canadian content regulations are psychologically maladapted to nurturing self-pride and promoting self-expression. In other countries where culture is considered important enough to the people's well-being that it deserves a fair chance to compete with American mass culture, the nation's culture is assumed to exist a priori and foreign influences -- at least in an industrial context -- are controlled by import quotas. It is assumed without question that limiting the amount of foreign programming entering a country in no way interferes with the free exchange of ideas, but only encourages more of them by increasing the diversity of choice within the country itself. Content regulations attempt to achieve the same goals, but at the cost of considerable ghettoization and readily evaded legislation.

While many program creators support content regulation, upon closer questioning there is some agreement that "content regulation" can be seen as only one metaphor for "cultural development" -- and that import quotas combined with production incentives may serve the same purpose better, as long as the appropriate structures and regulations for monitoring them are securely in place.

With the emphasis shifted from content to quotas, defining an import becomes much easier than defining what is Canadian. Instead of attempting to capture the essence of Canadianness in elaborate webs clumsily woven from point counts and cultural markers, a panel of representatives from the Canadian broadcasting system, acting on the premise that they have a sense of their own culture, would decide whether material was imported or not. Most often, that decision would be based on country of origin: if non-Canadians entered Canada to generate program material here, the merits of their proposed programming would be judged by those producing bodies in the public and private sectors willing to hire them. If they sought public funds from a body such as the Broadcast Fund, it also would decide to give support not on the basis of Canadian content but on the basis of merit.

Replacing Canadian content regulations with import quotas would also relieve the commission of having to define format and scheduling rules. Promises of performance in private radio, for example, would no longer be based on stations adhering strictly to their main formats such as MOR or rock. With an import quota of 50% on music and spoken word, it is doubtful that a station could find enough Canadian recordings in a particular genre to fill the time. In order not to alienate its audience with excessive repeats, the station would have to include more live performance programming and play other kinds of music related to its "main" genre in such a way that its regular audience would find the expanded playlist acceptable.

Under these circumstances, the selection of the music and the bridging material would require careful planning, not on the basis of ratings alone -- which current format regulations force stations to rely on -- but on the basis of informed risk-taking. The result might be the quality entertainment programming which present format stipulations have patently failed to achieve. Similar principles would apply to television: tax incentives to produce different types of programming in prime listening and viewing hours could also be applied.

Import quotas cannot replace content regulations until the proper mechanisms for stimulating Canadian program production are firmly in place and functioning successfully. Other sections of this chapter suggest how this might be done, but any change in the broadcasting system has huge ripple effects on the infrastructure. No major change can therefore be implemented without extensive evaluation. This does not mean extended delays: as Pay-TV and the Broadcast Fund have shown, dramatic effects occur very quickly. New legislation must build in short-term feedback/review cycles to adjust to the rapidly changing broadcasting environment.

D. Recommendations

1. Appointments and hiring at the CRTC should draw on expertise in all sectors of the broadcasting industry.
2. A new Broadcasting Act should be detailed enough that the CRTC can interpret and enforce it without ministerial directives. Cabinet review must be restricted to well-defined areas, and must not include licensing.
3. Upon expiry, licenses should be opened to competitive bids, not just appraised for renewal.
4. The principles that the airwaves are public and that the CRTC regulates them for the public good must be clearly stated in the Broadcasting Act.
5. Content regulations should be replaced by import quotas throughout the broadcasting system. The percentage of import material allowed must be determined only after consultation with all sectors of each medium.
6. No new discretionary cable channels or networks should be licensed until the effects of new legislation have been gauged.
7. Once new legislation concerning copyright is enacted, the CRTC should regulate copyright so that Canadian creators receive proper royalties.

III. THE CBC

> When the CBC is instructed by Parliament to do what it can to promote Canadian unity and identity, it is not always realized that unity and identity are quite different things to be promoting, and that in Canada they are perhaps more different than they are anywhere else. Identity is local and regional, rooted in the imagination and in works of culture; unity is national in reference, international in perspective, and rooted in a political feeling ... The tension between this political sense of unity and the imaginative sense of locality is the essence of whatever the word "Canadian" means. Once the tension is given up, and the two elements of unity and identity are confused or assimilated to each other, we get the two endemic diseases of Canadian life. Assimilating identity to unity produces the empty gestures of cultural nationalism; assimilating unity to identity produces the kind of provincial isolation which is now called separatism.
>
> Northrop Frye, The Bush Garden

A ready indicator of how Canadians feel about themselves and their culture can be found in opinions about the CBC. In a report such as this, which tends to encourage negative criticism rather than well-deserved praise, the CBC has fared very poorly. There is immense dissatisfaction with this maternal icon of Canadian culture, embodying as she does so many of the country's ideals and betrayals.

The harsh treatment of the CBC by the present government can be seen as resentment of those betrayals, although the CBC by itself is hardly to blame. In chastizing the CBC, the government chastizes itself -- and, by extension, all of us for not living up to the ideals which the CBC embodies. Only expressions of popular support can convince the government that the people wish to set the CBC free once again to light the country's way to self-expression.

A. The Mandate

i) Unity and identity

The quotation above from Northrop Frye addresses problems in the Broadcasting Act that need clarification: Frye's ideas echo the feelings of many program creators, and their implications are significant.

Canadian cultural identity can be found throughout Canada in all its regions: some characteristics may be common to all regions, some may differ, but all are individual and Canadian at the same time. Unity, on the other hand, is a structural concept: it can be political (e.g., the federal government), or it might be technological (e.g., the delivery mechanism of a national broadcasting system).

Federal politics are part of Canadian culture: presenting and commenting upon them is part of the CBC's mandate to "promote national unity," i.e. not to promote federalism per se, but to allow all Canadians to watch the federal process at work. Similarly, it is clearly the CBC's mandate to insure that whatever images of Canada it generates are made as accessible as possible to as many Canadians as possible. That too promotes national unity, in the sense of equal access.

Any mode of cultural expression apart from modes similar to those described above pertains to identity, not unity. A televised debate between two politicians is an expression of unity; a play _about_ two debating politicians, or about life in the federal civil service, or about relations between the English and French in Montreal, is an expression of cultural identity -- but identity of a particular kind. First of all, these are expressions of regional identity, in the sense that they reflect the life and concerns of people living in Ottawa and Montreal. But for those sub-cultures, issues of national unity form part of their identity, perhaps more so than in areas outside central Canada. To that extent, they are also expressions, though obviously not the only ones, of national identity.

In Frye's terms, the concentration of power at the CBC in central Canada has assimilated national identity to national unity. Because so much of the CBC's role is to inform the nation about issues of national unity, it has gradually evolved to a point where the presentation of those issues in itself is assumed to constitute national identity. Centred by the technological demands of traditional film production in the political power centres of Toronto and Montreal, the corporation has naturally over the years grown into the assumption that what it expresses out of those centres is a national identity -- whereas in fact it is to a large extent only a reflection of its mandate to promote national unity.

This usurpation of a common heritage by central Canada provokes disaffected anger from individual creators and regions alike. They articulate that rage by claiming that the identity of central Canada has become the benchmark for all Canadian identities. Acutely sensitive to these accusations, CBC network attempts to repair the damage by ineffective quota systems for regional production and scheduling. But these are unacceptable to the regions because they emanate from a power structure which they believe is identified, not with the national interest, but with one specific region -- central Canada. The sad irony is that genuine expressions of national identity -- actual plays about two politicians arguing or about bicultural tensions, even musicals that are palpably "Canadian" in their sensibility without being identifiably regional in content -- are virtually absent from the CBC, certainly in English Canada.

Budget cuts only sharpen these conflicts. Threatened by extinction, the power centre concentrates strength and sacrifices the regions, throwing into high relief the intrinsic problem of the CBC. The only solution is to grant to as many significant exponents of cultural identity as possible a power commensurate with their creative energy. Once the demands of promoting national unity are clearly separated out, it will then be easier to see how all of the regions, including central Canada, also manifest aspects of a national identity -- and that too should be articulated openly and without prejudice, regardless of where the concentration of facilities and institutional power is found.

Given its present resources, the CBC cannot do all this. A second public television network is necessary but, judging from the vehemence of interviewees' comments, that network should not come under CBC jurisdiction. As a separate public body (called TV-Canada here for convenience), the new corporation could broadcast repeats of CBC and private sector productions, work by independent producers and foreign programming (see section V B.). If a body like TV-Canada were set up, the CBC could also devote itself immediately to exclusively Canadian programming.

ii) Setting the example

Whatever dissatisfaction creators had with the CBC, nobody was willing to abolish the idea of a public broadcaster: "The CBC is all we have," was a common feeling, and there was universal support for the principle behind it. One creator's image of the "first man through the snowdrift" captured the mood: the CBC not only expresses the will of the people, it leads them as well. In fact, many felt that the CBC could do much more enlightening entertainment: David Suzuki's programs were cited as examples. At the same time, the CBC should not shy away from screening provocative programs on the grounds that it must retain journalistic objectivity. Just because one program does not present both sides of an argument is no reason not to show it, as long as at some point in the scheduling another program may offer a different viewpoint.

The CBC was urged not to depend so much on ratings in determining its programming. Ratings measure the commercial appeal of a program, not necessarily its popular appeal. The CBC must not become esoteric and appeal exclusively to small minorities, but it must also have faith in its own ability to lead, take risks and learn from its mistakes. Without that attitude, it will only be the servant of commercial interests rather than serving the true needs of the people.

Many questioned the CBC's obsession with its public image, manifested in too much concern with its own success as an institution and not enough with the talent and programs appearing on it. Although "looking good" was considered a desirable goal, many felt that the corporation was too concerned with maintaining a flashy look in imitation of its American counterparts.

B. Network, Regions and Communities

1) Critical mass

Every level of the CBC feels disenfranchised, and the corporation's low morale has been consolidated by the 1984 cutbacks. The reductions have refuelled the endless conflict between the network and the regions, but no one is under any illusions that whatever power exists in the CBC rests in its Ottawa headquarters. The recent centralization of power and streamlining of accounting procedures -- with crippling effects on production -- have only reinforced long-standing animosities.

The predominance of the network in scheduling and access to facilities is usually justified by the idea of critical mass -- a concentration of resources in one centre produces a better product. From the viewpoint of financial resources, this remains true to a large degree. It is not so true, however, of human and technological resources. Two decades ago, it may indeed have been true that for many types of television programs, the best place to go was central Canada. But the Hollywood film production model based on sophisticated technology, studio production and unionization has turned the CBC network into an inflexible bureaucracy unable to meet new challenges.

Under relentless financial pressure, the CBC's survival plan has been to preserve the network and jettison local programming first and then regional. In terms of program creation and giving Canadian artists access to the broadcasting system, the policy has been crippling. Another technique of network survival -- ad revenues from American programming in prime time -- has had similar effects.

For the CBC to exercise its mandate as a voice for Canadian self-expression, it must get back in touch with the constituency it was intended to serve. The technology has now made feasible a shift from a centralized, institutional, studio production process to a decentralized, flexible, live/on location model. This does not necessarily entail reducing the amount of network television programming: all levels of the CBC will use the new technology, with significant cost reductions. A distribution body like TV-Canada will insure that if local and regional shows were to occupy more of the broadcast day, network production does not have to be reduced for scheduling reasons. But the most important goal is to produce more live programming and provide greater access to public broadcasting services for a wider spectrum of the public than is presently the case.

ii) Independent production

Given the above analysis, the push to make CBC accept independent production demoralizes its personnel and is ultimately self-destructive. The public monies which the CBC spends on license fees and hidden overhead costs to support independent production should come from another public source. The CBC needs all its money for its own productions, and allocating those scarce resources to outsiders working with inflated Broadcast Fund budgets erodes in-house production. All independent producers should have access to CBC facilities, however, subject to economic rents.

The supposed superior efficiency of the private sector purely on the production level is a myth: the real inefficiencies of the CBC lie in its hopeless labour/management relations and departmental overheads. Replacing in-house with independent production is like chopping down a tree to get rid of a diseased root. Either the root of the problem -- CBC management -- can be treated on its own, in which case the tree can survive; otherwise, the whole organism is doomed and may as well be scrapped.

iii) Local and community programming

As potential producers of programs, the CBC and the NFB have immense resources which should be utilized and made accessible at all levels and especially to the local community. With TV-Canada providing more distribution possibilities for CBC network and regional product, the corporation can revitalize its local and community roots. At present, the community channel on the basic cable service is not used to full effect: if the channel were taken over by TV-Canada, a shift in CBC's priorities would allow the corporation to address community programming. In this way, another public network could be accommodated and made widely available on the same basis as the one CBC channel is now.

Program creators are almost unanimous in stating that the CBC does not provide reasonable access to talent across the country. Increasingly its role has instead been to acknowledge successful talent through information programming. This must be supplemented by providing opportunities for new talent at the local/community level, at the source where it originates, and allowing it to grow up through the system.

It is imperative that, in addition to a common sense of national belonging, audiences in each region can relate to their own artists, who in turn need the audience's support and approval to survive. Although production values are important, it is more important -- if a choice has to be made -- to give program creators the chance to grow. The fact that many audiences are used to American-style television does not necessarily mean that they will not accept -- or do not want -- another style which may have evolved from their own cultural milieu. To support this growth, local and regional directors must be given the authority to make decisions, to issue broadcast letters and to hire locally.

In the final analysis, only the public broadcaster can be depended upon to carry out these responsibilities. The argument that the CBC should not duplicate local services already provided by the private sector is fallacious: if the private sector decides a local programming area is not profitable, it will withdraw. Market forces are unpredictable, and the CBC must decide according to its own mandate and community needs what services it should provide. A strong public broadcasting presence in smaller communities can have dramatic results. Critical mass theories reject regional production on the grounds of inadequate facilities, and to some extent that is justifiable. But not stimulating those regions can only insure that the statement remains true, whereas digging roots into the community can generate the energy required for the quantum leaps in production capability that can lead to stable regional industries down the line.

C. Management

The angriest and most persistent criticism throughout the interviews was reserved for CBC management, which was universally regarded, after inadequate funds, as the major obstacle to the successful creation of programs within the corporation. Even making allowances for natural worker-management tensions -- feelings heightened by the extraordinary demands media production makes on human resources -- the intensity of the antagonism was unusual and disturbing.

The dominant theme running through most of the comments on CBC management was its negative attitude -- a lack of faith in individuals to make decisions, and hence a reluctance to grant them the authority to do so. Acutely aware of their inability to influence decisions in any real sense, middle managers justify their existence by making decisions whose only purpose is to place them in the chain of command, thereby blocking communication channels and delaying production. A constant complaint was the inability of creators to obtain clear-cut decisions in a reasonable amount of time. Such conditions make cooperation in pursuit of a common creative goal virtually impossible.

Major decisions in recent years affecting the CBC's infrastructure have tended to worsen the situation. By the 1970s, rigid departmentalization had set in, seriously cutting down the effectiveness of autonomous creative units. Concerned that too many managerial empires were being built, senior management recently completed an extreme centralization of authority and accounting procedures which has left regional managers with even less authority than before and made production even more of a nightmare: as one producer said, it only resulted in "lengthening the lines and tightening the reins."

Because managers rarely have production or technical experience, they are considered ignorant of the real problems facing program creators. CBC management has not adequately addressed labour issues raised by new technology, and relations with its unionized employees are extremely hostile. Instead of addressing substantive issues, the CBC in its current negotiations has taken a hard-line stand, blaming all the corporation's problems on union inflexibility. The unions have responded in kind. Unless the CBC is persuaded to modify its stand a strike is inevitable, and the CBC will lose the last vestiges of credibility it has with the government and the people. The "inflexibility" of the unions in the CBC's jurisdiction has been conditioned by decades of mismanagement and misunderstanding which can only be erased by rebuilding from ground zero.

Whatever new mandates and structures are suggested for the CBC, without a complete review of its organization and management conducted in collaboration with an outside consultant, the corporation will continue to have severe personnel and production handicaps. Any suggested changes to management must be implemented by the CBC on the understanding that they do not deviate in any way from the consultant's report. The rock-bottom morale at the CBC is not the result of the 1984 cutbacks themselves, but the way in which they were implemented. A repeat performance conducted by the same management will be disastrous.

The following checklist of issues is a bare minimum for addressing the CBC's management problems:

- increased communication vertically and horizontally throughout the corporation
- increased access to real budget figures, including overheads
- proper career path models for all personnel, including retraining
- mandatory ongoing production or technical experience for management
- recognition of technicians as creative co-workers rather than menial subordinates
- union responsibility for standards and training
- immediate handling of union grievances without automatic referral to arbitration
- encouragement of generalist skills and cross-departmental creative endeavours
- more feedback of all kinds, and especially official acknowledgement of jobs well done
- more authority for Human Resources in mediation rather than a subservient role to management

D. Radio

None of the interviewees who worked on CBC Radio had ever worked for a private radio station, and vice versa. CBC Radio is a universe unto itself and, apart from the general criticisms noted above, one that functions smoothly. The absence of commercials and the relative freedom from mass audience pressures have given it an unusual measure of self-determination, as demonstrated by the aims set forth in its comprehensive Radio Development Project.

What is remarkable about that document and the recent major adjustments to CBC Radio programming is that, despite its uniformly sound analysis, the report has been ignored in so many respects. The changes in programming have instead been justified by the notion that CBC Radio is "giving the audience what it wants" -- in other words, that the CBC was following the lead of the private sector in going after the largest possible audiences, and sacrificing parts of its mandate to do so.

Program creators at CBC Radio have puzzled over the rationale behind ghettoizing music on FM and the proliferation of Morningside clones -- the "repeat last year's hit" syndrome -- on AM. Several theorize that Radio management was being pressured by senior management to gain higher audience shares in an effort to demonstrate to Parliament that CBC Radio was not elitist, and hence to discourage further cutbacks. If that is true, it tells a sad story about how unsure of its own values and purpose the CBC really is: everyone agreed that changes at CBC Radio were in order, but not changes that so drastically reduced the diversity of CBC Radio in favour of larger audiences.

The narrowing diversity of CBC Radio is of special concern to independent radio producers, many of whom find themselves with no access at all to either program slots or corporation facilities. Rigid union rules forbid outsiders access to studios even for preproduction and monitoring purposes. The same rules forbid the corporation to purchase work by independents who did not record on location using a NABET technician. The result is that it is financially almost impossible for independent producers to get on CBC Radio.

With a restructuring of the CBC that might loosen jurisdictions around studio use, some of these problems might be alleviated. At the same time, private radio stations and networks are already looking for more non-music Canadian programming, and would need even more if required by the CRTC to increase domestic broadcast. With more markets available in both the public and private sectors, a radio section of the Broadcast fund should be established to stimulate production by independent and private producers. The relatively high number of frequencies on AM and FM combined with the relatively low cost of radio programming and packaging should quickly increase diversity. Even though almost all frequencies are now allocated, some will become available if licensing and promise of performance procedures are made stricter.

E. Television

The discussion in the first three parts of this section has already indicated certain innovations which might allow CBC Television to fulfill its mandate to the Canadian people. These include the transfer of independent production out of the CBC's jurisdiction, a second public network under separate jurisdiction which would carry repeats of CBC productions, the elimination of all foreign programming and scheduling adjustments to allow more time for local/community and regional production as opposed to network in the CBC broadcast day. Further details of these changes can be found in section V.

The fundamental reality underlying these recommendations is that CBC Television has assimilated the dominant American film-production model. Through a combination of technological, institutional and political pressures, the corporation has equated success in broadcasting with translation of American television into the Canadian context. But cultural markers in themselves are not sufficient to reflect our identity: references to Mounties in a 1986 Canadian-produced sitcom are only a partial improvement over similar references in the notorious "Canadian advertising" Hollywood movies of the 1940s. Unless stories, genres and sensibilities are developed which truly reflect aspects of Canada, then the proper mandate of the CBC has not been achieved.

Creating programs in American television formats is an art in itself, one which Canadians produce in significant quantity for the entertainment of millions. They are necessary and desirable, but there must be room for the exploration and development of Canadian formats as well. Meaningful results in this regard can only be achieved by encouraging program creators to draw on Canada's substantial radio and film legacies, and on the significant amount of talent evident in other media across the country.

F. Funding

i) Commercials

Although almost all program creators were against commercials on CBC Television, most accepted them as a reality in the current economic climate. A more positive attitude towards commercials based on the balance overall in the broadcasting system between cultural and economic goals might answer their objections. The CBC could take advertising (except for children's programming), but only on condition that any commercial breaks would not interfere with the creative flow of the program. Audiences for certain programs are much more sensitive to commercial interruptions than others, so the rule would be that the program determines the frequency and location of the ads, not vice versa.

This in turn would mean a drop in ad revenues -- but all-Canadian programming would also mean no outlays on expensive foreign programming. Furthermore, with new technology making high-quality location shooting much more feasible, less studio production would mean lower production costs overall.

Apart from political and fiscal realities, selling Canadian programs to Canadian advertisers can be viewed as a psychological virture. By honestly presenting Canadian programs without artistic compromises and without fighting the private sector for mass audiences, the corporation could follow the lead of other media in presenting its programs on a target-oriented basis to media buyers. This kind of sales operation would be reinforced once scheduling was adjusted to include a higher percentage of local and regional programming.

ii) Additional revenues

The marketing of CBC productions was sharply criticized by professionals. Proper care has not been given to CBC's libraries and archives, with the result that much of its historical material might not be suitable for re-broadcast. Nevertheless, the volume of radio and television production over the last decade could produce significant returns if placed in the proper markets, especially in educational and classical culture sales.

The almost complete lack of communication between public and private radio has produced a situation in which CBC vaults contain thousands of spoken-word programs, at the same time as private stations wonder where to acquire more Canadian spoken-word shows. Once both sectors overcome the preconception that everything on the CBC is "high-brow," the CBC could sell much more than As It Happens both in Canada and abroad.

The above proposals for restructuring the CBC would not cost more than its current parliamentary allotment. Debits would accrue from diminished ad revenue for American programs (perhaps only initially), increased volume of production overall and new equipment. On the credit side would be the eliminated outlay for foreign program acquisition, lower program costs overall as production goes live and on location, salary and benefit savings from staff reduction, and license fees from TV-Canada. A stable budget notwithstanding, the CBC still needs, as ever, a five-year budget base and an increase in parliamentary funding.

G. Recommendations

1. The CBC requires a detailed mandate squarely addressing the issues of unity and identity, emphasizing the need for diversity over mass appeal and guaranteeing access to the corporation's resources from community level up.
2. Management must devolve authority to the regional and local/community levels.
3. More local/community and regional production slots should be introduced into daily schedules.
4. If another public network is introduced, CBC can take over community programming and the basic cable community channel can be allotted to the new network.

5. Once a new mandate for the CBC is set, the management structure must be completely overhauled and union relations revised accordingly.
6. Independently produced and foreign programming should be eliminated from CBC Television.
7. Commercials should appear on adult television programming only with the understanding that the creative demands of the program take precedence with regard to frequency and placement.

IV. THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In order to satisfy copyright demands and generate revenues for both Canadian advertisers and program producers, a "gateway" approach to foreign programming is recommended (see section V. under "Broadcast fund"). By eliminating competition among Canadian buyers of foreign product, the purchase price would go down -- and revenues for the private sector would go up proportionately. By taxing these revenues in a fair relation to profits, substantial income would be generated for program production. This process would apply to both television and radio.

In the absence of Canadian content and format regulations, private radio and television could produce and program whatever they wanted whenever they wanted, within the limits of import quotas. Quality Canadian production would be stimulated by the Broadcast fund, and by potential tax reductions if broadcasters lowered import quotas with appropriate programming.

A. Pay-TV and Discretionary Cable

As recommended in the section on the CRTC, no further licenses should be issued in these areas at the moment. Import quotas should be set for current licensees, although care must be taken that they are not set too low to be counterproductive. For example, a persuasive argument can be made that low import quotas on a pay movie channel can alienate viewers from Canadian films because of limited availability and excessive repeats. To make pay and discretionary licensees more responsive to broadcasting and stimulating Canadian production, the present conditions of license -- and attendant economic considerations -- would have to be substantially overhauled. The best policy at the moment would be non-intervention until new measures for stimulating production begin to take effect.

B. Recommendations

1. The stimulation of program production should depend on tax incentives and the abolition of content and format regulations in favour of import quotas.
2. Direct taxation of ad revenues on foreign programming acquisition by the private sector can provide additional monies for the Broadcast Fund.

V. STIMULATING PRODUCTION

A. The Broadcast Fund

In its present form, the Broadcast fund has stimulated production in a number of areas, and can claim several outstanding successes.

However, from the viewpoint of broadcasters and independent producers whose work is primarily directed at radio and television, the fund is compromised by serving two masters of cultural industry, film and broadcasting. The principle governing such funds should be that they stimulate production and distribution for one particular medium, with ancillary distribution in another medium playing a secondary role.

At present, the Broadcast fund derives its revenues from the 7 percent levy on cable. If the fund administered the purchase and resale of foreign programs to Canadian stations and networks, taxes on private sector profits and ad revenues would provide additional monies for the fund.

A broader financial base would allow the fund to accomplish several objectives. First, it could begin funding additional program producers in radio and Pay-TV. It could also make all types of programming eligible for funding. More available cash would reduce pressure on the fund to act as investor, rather than as a prime resource for research and development. At the moment, the fund's demands for first position in recoupment is considered onerous to small producers, and there is general agreement that to keep production flowing, the fund must lower its expectations of recoupment and extend repayment deadlines to four years or more.

The fund has been strongly criticized for adopting a Hollywood feature mentality with inflated budgets to boot. Its demands that only producers be responsible for money matters has restricted creative access to the fund. By eliminating films primarily intended for windows other than radio and television, the fund would adjust its mindset to more appropriate aspirations, and hence do a better job of serving program creators.

Co-production would also play a less significant role with a financially stronger, more delimited Broadcast fund. The fine art of juggling several producers from different sectors and countries, each demanding a voice in the creative mix, often produces financial guarantees in exchange for artistic compromise. The less need for co-production financial investment, the closer the product to the creator's original vision -- and the better its chances of sales down the line once its quality has been recognized.

B. TV-Canada

Increased production by both the public and private television sectors has clearly demonstrated the need for another universally accessible distribution network. This would take England's Channel 4 as a model in that it would only be an exhibitor, not a producer, of programs; its two divisions would serve both the English and French markets. However, its sources would not be confined to the domestic private sector: TV-Canada could license foreign programs through the Broadcast fund, production from NFB and independent producers, as well as repeat programs from the CBC and private networks and stations.

If CBC were to take over responsibility for community programming, TV-Canada could take over the community cable channel. It would be available everywhere that CBC was available, with certain hours allotted for minority French/English programming, as on TV Ontario. With the CBC becoming more accessible to local/community programmers, the delivery of programming from small centres to the nearest distribution point might require linking in to Cancom, which would also be distributing the TV-Canada signal to remote places. To coordinate the various feeds in smaller centres, Cancom and similar services should be placed under the aegis of TV-Canada, insuring that those services fulfill the mandate of the broadcasting system.

Apart from an initial parliamentary appropriation for startup purposes, TV-Canada should pay for itself by selling commercial space on the same basis as the CBC.

C. Recommendations

1. The Broadcast fund should be established as a separate entity from Telefilm and concentrate on production for broadcasting.
2. Independent radio producers should have access to the fund.

3. The fund should act as a gateway for foreign programming. It would purchase programs, make copyright payments, resell to private Canadian buyers and generate more money for stimulating Canadian production.
4. The fund should place less emphasis on investment and recoupment, and more emphasis on research and development.
5. The fund should place no restrictions on the types of program eligible for funding.
6. A second public network (TV-Canada) should operate in both English and French to distribute foreign programs, NFB films, works by independent producers and repeats from the public and private sectors.
7. TV-Canada would occupy the community channel slot on basic cable.
8. Cancom would be placed under TV-Canada to insure delivery and return of CBC and TV-Canada material in remote places.
9. TV-Canada would sell commercial space on the same basis as the CBC.

VI. CONCLUSION

The recommendations in this chapter represent a distillation and extrapolation of comments from program creators, and as such naturally reflect the needs of that constituency.

Overall, they support the principle of a broadcasting system where the airwaves are a public resource to be used for the cultural benefit of the Canadian people. Although legislation originally placed the CBC in sole control of the system, political and economic realities have relegated the CBC to a primus inter pares position with the private sector. To that extent, the present model reflects a balance common to many Canadian institutions, especially in communications.

In their comments, the 57 program creators echoed the concerns of the system's founders that American broadcasting not submerge nascent Canadian creativity in this area. To a large extent, they feel that their mandated pacesetter in this regard, the CBC, has become compromised. To regain its leading role, it must undergo substantive reorganization and redefinition of its goals.

Over the years, the CBC's problems have been inflamed by the failure of the CRTC to enforce its mandate. A reinvigoration of that mandate, with more enforceable and targeted legislation, as well as the establishment of a more secure Broadcast fund and a new public distribution network, should insure access and realization of the diverse ideas which these program creators intend to produce in the years to come.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Roger Abbott, writer and performer, Toronto

Norma Bailey, film director and producer, Winnipeg

Larry Barclay, cameraman, CFTO, Toronto

Armand Baril, radio and television producer, CBC Edmonton

Douglas Bowie, screenwriter, Kingston

Len Carter, film editor, CBC Toronto

Cathy Chilco, television producer, CBC Vancouver

Stephen Colwill, program director, CHEZ-FM, Ottawa

Fred Diehl, radio producer, CBC Toronto

Ann Ditchburn, choreographer, Toronto

David Dobbs, recording engineer, CBC Toronto

Bob Fresco, cinematographer and producer, Toronto

Vicki Gabereau, radio host, Vancouver

Stuart Gillard, television writer and producer, Toronto

Barbara Gordon, performer, Toronto

Paul Gratton, program director and producer, First Choice Pay-TV, Toronto

John Gray, writer and musician, Vancouver

Alan Guettel, radio producer, CBC Toronto

Les Harris, film director and producer, Toronto

Alexander Hausvater, radio producer and film director, Montreal

Jeff Hyslop, choreographer, Toronto

Paulette Jiles, writer and radio producer, Nelson, B.C.

John Juliani, radio producer, CBC Vancouver

Danny Kakeputum, radio producer, Sioux Lookout, Ontario

Mas Kikuta, audio engineer, CBC Toronto

Norm Kolisnyk, video controller, CBC Winnipeg

Jeannine Locke, film writer and producer, CBC Toronto
Kate Lynch, performer, Toronto
Colin MacLean, television writer and host, CBC Edmonton
Ron Manson, cameraman, CBC Halifax
John Martin, producer, CITY, Toronto
Jack McAndrew, film producer, Charlottetown
Don McBrearty, film director, Toronto
John McGill, audio technician, Toronto
Suzanne Mess, set and costume designer, CBC Toronto
Andrew Mielewczyk, program director, CFMB-AM, Montreal
Larry Mirkin, film producer, Toronto
Ken Mitchell, writer, Regina
Jim Murray, film producer, CBC Toronto
David Pritchard, radio producer, Toronto
Peter Rosenfeld, cameraman and editor, CBC Halifax
Paul Saltzman, film producer, Toronto
Mark Sanderford, television producer, Frobisher Bay
Paul Soles, host and performer, Toronto
Michael Steele, television writer and producer, Toronto
Barbara Sweete, film director, Toronto
Deanne Taylor, performer and television producer, Toronto
Stan Thomas, program director and producer, CKND, Winnipeg
R. H. Thomson, performer, Toronto
Barry Vessey, master controller, Charlottetown
Mary Walsh, writer and performer, St. John's
Anne Wheeler, film director and producer, Edmonton
Chris Whiteley, musician, Toronto
Don Williams, television producer, CBC Vancouver
Tim Wilson, radio producer, Toronto
Colin Yardley, writer and producer, Vancouver
Ray Yates, lighting technician, CBC Vancouver

Also interviewed:

Shirley Adamson, announcer/operator, CBC Whitehorse
Amin Bhatia, musician and producer, CKXL-FM, Calgary
Peter Bolsby, master controller, CBC Toronto
Dennis Genereux, cameraman, CBC Calgary
Jacques Perreault, cameraman, CBC Montreal
Paul Scott, technical switcher, CBC Halifax
Stephan Sloboda, audio recordist, CBC Windsor
Ken Sunley, maintenance technician, CBC Regina

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

I. DEFINING THE UNIVERSE

The professionals interviewed were representative as regards age, gender, geographical location and the interests of special groups such as native people.

The following grid (see next page) insured an adequate cross-section of opinion. However, because the grid attempted to structure a fluid and complex industry for the purpose of research, anomalies were inevitable. For example, the differences between regional and network were negligible in the private sector, and "Other Technologies" (cable, teletext, DBS, etc.) is a relatively new programming area not amenable at present to meaningful subdivision. The universe for certain areas such as public network television was much greater than others such as private local television. Also, professionals were often active in more than one area: overlap was most apparent among television producers and directors in the public and private sectors.

II. SELECTING THE SAMPLE

Every attempt was made in the preliminary stages to locate suitable individuals for each area of the grid. Considerations in selecting the interviewees included experience, an ability to be articulate about their work and the broadcasting context surrounding it, and a relatively low profile with regard to public statements on broadcasting policy.

	RADIO			TELEVISION			OTHER TECHNOLOGIES	ALL MEDIA
	Producers/ Directors		Designers/ Technicians	Producers/ Directors		Designers/ Technicians		Writers/ Performers
	Public	Private		Public	Private			
LOCAL								
REGIONAL								
NETWORK								

The number of individuals in each area was adjusted to bring it in line with the proportions in the real universe. The list was drawn from the following sources:

1) Personal knowledge of the industry
2) Recommendations from contacts in the industry
3) The CBC Talent Bank
4) Contacts in ACTRA, NABET, CUPE, IATSE and various craft organizations

III. PROCEDURES

The project had three phases: contact interviews, in-depth interviews and report preparation. All interviews were conducted by telephone and taped.

Phase 1: The approach in the first phase of contact interviews was to generate as much raw data as possible from areas of immediate concern to the interviewee, for example:

- audience response
- community relations
- funding
- local/regional/network ratios
- management relations
- programming and scheduling
- technological innovation
- training and policy directives
- working conditions

During the contact interview, the interviewee learned about the project and was given five questions which had been designed to cast a wide net around opinions generated by the above topics. The interviewees could answer the questions in the light of federal broadcasting policy if they so desired, but they were not at this point asked to refer to any specific issues, e.g. Canadian content. The aim was to get the professionals talking about their work first before expressing opinions on larger policy issues.

75 people were contacted for the report of whom 65 agreed to participate. 57 ~~were~~ worked in the target programming area, while the other 8 provided relevant information. 50 received their questions in the form of questionnaires of which 21 were returned along with some biographical information. The remaining 15 were given the questions over the telephone.

The questions were:

1) If the overall or contract budget in the area you work was decreased by 10 per cent, what would you cut first? If increased by 10 per cent, where would you spend first? Why?

2) Apart from money, do you perceive obstacles in your working conditions that prevent you from performing your job to the best of your creative ability? If so, please elaborate.

3) Do you think that your geographical location affects a) your working conditions b) opportunities for dissemination of your work? If so, please explain.

4) With respect to your particular job, what improvements would you recommend in employer/employee relations, either in the context of labour/management relations or contract employment?

5) Do you feel there is sufficient feedback about the work you do from a) your employer b) your audience c) your peers? How would you improve the feedback process?

Phase 2: In preparation for the in-depth interview, my assistant Liz Kalman and I processed the questionnaires and biographical material, and did further research arising from the information provided. In this interview, lasting one to two hours, the interviewee's answers to the questions were explored to see if they had implications for broadcasting policy. Some were already clear in the answers; if not, I raised key issues myself to allow the interviewee to express an opinion: these included Canadian content regulations, regional concerns, the influence of the United States programming and technology, the future of public broadcasting, the funding of broadcasting, etc.

All respondents prepared answers to the questionnaire, although in many cases those answers and biographical material were not available to me before the interview. Nevertheless, in these cases a brief biographical discussion at the outset of the interview led directly into the questions and further substantive issues. As a result, the approach in the interviews overall maintained a high level of uniformity.

Phase 3: The final report comprises a summary of recurring themes raised by the questionnaire and the interviews. In cases where interviewees requested anonymity for "off-the-record" comments which I felt should be included in the report, I gave guarantees of confidentiality on the understanding that I might also be requested by the Task Force to document such statements. This I would do in a way that would preserve those guarantees.